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and to All That
Brings Happiness to
Human Beings*

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NUMBER 2

THE LIGUORIAN IS INDEXED
IN THE CATHOLIC PERIODICAL INDEX

THE LIGUORIAN

LIGUORI, MO.

HOW IGNORANT ARE YOU

Ignorance is not always bliss. Sometimes it is just as guilty as the sins it causes. Therefore it is a most important topic for self-examination.

?

DONALD F. MILLER, C.S.S.R.

NO insult to any reader of these lines is intended by the question posed in the title above. That is because nobody but God knows everything, and no one human being can ever acquire all the limited knowledge that is available to human beings in general. Some have special and advanced knowledge in one field; others in quite different specialized fields. Thus all of us have to admit that we are ignorant in some matters; that we lack knowledge that may be possessed by others.

But there is one field of knowledge in which the above question is supremely important for everybody. That is the field of religion and morals, of those truths that pertain to the eternal destiny of every human being. In such matters ignorance will play a telling role in the judgment that will be rendered by God over every man and woman at the moment of their death, "according to their works."

ON the one hand, nobody will ever be condemned to hell by God for sins committed, or good deeds omitted, through invincible and inculpable ignorance. On the other hand, ignorance itself will sometimes turn out to have been as guilty and deserving of punishment as the very sins it caused. Hence the question: How ignorant are you, in respect to your religious, moral and spiritual obligations? How much responsibility do you have for ignorance about God, about His revelations, about His will, about His commands? In what matters will ignorance save you from guilt, and in what will it add to your condemnation?

The right way to explore this subject, and to make it fruitful for self-examination, is, first, to define ignorance in general, and then to distinguish and give examples of the various kinds of ignorance that have

a bearing on human conduct. Let it be noted again that we are concerned only with the kind of ignorance that has a bearing on the goodness or badness of human actions.

I. IGNORANCE IN GENERAL

Ignorance in general may be defined as lack of knowledge, or of a specific kind of knowledge, in a person who is capable of possessing it, and who has some need or use for it.

The human mind was made by God to seek and possess truth. Indeed the human mind has an insatiable desire for truth, which may be called an insuppressible curiosity. This is what drives men to read newspapers and books, to spend years or a whole life-time in study, to rejoice in every bit of knowledge that is acquired. But the one most important kind of knowledge that the human mind was made to seek and acquire is that which concerns the nature, the destiny, the obligations and responsibilities of man himself. Every human being recognizes in himself a need and desire to know why he was created, to what end he should aspire, how he should live and how he should die. That is why there is always a demand for books that profess to teach more and more about human nature itself.

SINCE ignorance, as it is being considered here, means lack of knowledge of the truth about oneself, it is obvious that the word cannot be applied to creatures of God that have no capacity for knowledge at all. A brute animal, or a plant, is not called ignorant. It knows nothing about it-

self, but at the same time it has no capacity for such knowledge.

Similarly, infants and insane people can be excluded from consideration in a study of the moral effect of ignorance. True, they have the faculties needed for acquiring knowledge, but through the accident of immaturity or of disease, they are unable to exercise the faculty and thus are never responsible morally for any consequences of their ignorance.

IF ignorance of moral and religious truth is to have a bearing on the destiny of individuals, then there must be some such truths that all men can quite easily come to know, and that they have a responsibility to try to know. These may be summed up briefly and in general as follows:

that there is a God, Who is the creator, law-giver, rewarder and punisher of all human beings;

that man is spiritual, immortal, accountable for his actions, free to win an everlasting happiness or to deserve an eternity of pain;

that God became man to redeem the human race from the effects of the sin of its first parents, to teach all men the horror of actual sin, and what is sin and what is not; to provide superabundant means through which men of good will could live in loyalty to God; to found a Church that would preserve and make known His teaching to the end of time, and also to distribute the graces He had merited for the human race.

Thus, in general, every human being in the world can know 1) God, 2) Christ as the Son of God and His

Redeemer, 3) the one true Church founded by Christ, 4) his own nature and destiny and needs, 5) and what he must do and avoid to gain heaven and avoid hell. Of course we use the word "know" here in a broad sense, meaning that every human being can know these truths either by using his reason or by accepting them by faith on the authoritative word of God. Of course, too, it must be noted that God's grace and help are needed to bring an individual to an effective knowledge of these truths; but it must also be noted that such grace and help will never be lacking to one who does what lies in his power.

Failure, then, to know or accept any of these truths, arises from one of two causes: 1) from circumstances over which the individual has no control; 2) from some deliberate and voluntary rejection of the truth, or refusal to use easily available means to acquire it. From this distinction comes the important division of ignorance into 1) blameless or inculpable ignorance; 2) blameworthy or culpable ignorance.

II. BLAMELESS IGNORANCE

The principle must be remembered that no person will ever be condemned by God for the consequences of ignorance that was no fault of his own. Such ignorance is sometimes called *invincible*, that is, the person afflicted with it has no opportunity or means, and therefore no moral consciousness of a duty, to dispel it. Of course invincible ignorance sometimes in due course changes into vin- cible, as when serious doubts arise in

the mind. But that will be treated under blameworthy ignorance below.

FIVE practical examples of blameless or inculpable ignorance can quickly be set down. It will be noted that in all these examples except the last, the responsibility for the ignorance rests in some degree with others rather than the ignorant person.

1. *The ignorance of a child*, who has the use of reason, but has not yet become aware of the evil of certain actions. It not seldom happens that a child of eight or ten or even more years is drawn into evil deeds by a father or mother, or brother or sister, or certain companions, without any realization that it is offending God. Sometimes this leads to great worry and scruples later on in life, when a clear realization of the objective evil of such deeds is first brought home to the mind.

THE truth is, however, that there is no such thing as retroactive guilt in the matter of sin. One must know, or at least be seriously doubtful, at the time an action is performed, that it is or may be sinful. Otherwise ignorance excuses one from guilt and therefore from accountability to God. Others may be very guilty for leading the child into sin, or more or less guilty for not properly instructing the child. But the ignorant child is not guilty of sin, even though it does something that is objectively wrong.

2. *The ignorance of heathens*, who have never been approached by any representative of Christianity. Hea-

thens can know God and that He is a rewarder of good and a punisher of evil; they can know quite a bit about the natural law. But it is impossible for them to know anything about Christ or His Church until someone instructs them. Therefore they will not be condemned by God for ignorance of what they had no opportunity to know. Rather the failure of easy-going Christians who did nothing to spread a knowledge of Christ to the heathen world may be condemned.

3. *The ignorance of Christians outside the Catholic Church*, who have been brought up from earliest childhood in such complete distrust of the Catholic Church, on so many misrepresentations of Catholic teaching, that they cannot be blamed for never doubting that the Catholic Church is not the true Church of Christ.

THIS ignorance is especially possible for those who live in a narrow circle of society, surrounded mostly by people who think like themselves, protected quite thoroughly from reading or studying anything that might bring to mind a doubt about the security of their religious position. It is unthinkable that many of these good Sunday-school teachers, conscientious, hard-working mothers and fathers, are ignorant of the Catholic Church through their own fault. All that they have ever read or heard or been taught makes them afraid of the Catholic Church.

At the same time, some who remain outside the Catholic Church have traveled and read and seen

enough to raise at least a serious and enduring doubt in their minds that the Catholic Church may be the true Church. With such serious doubts, their ignorance, as will be seen, can no longer be called blameless or invincible.

4. *Ignorance due to erroneous advice or wrong commands given by a confessor or a pastor.* It is rare that, in a matter involving sin, one who is so thoroughly trained and tested for his task of directing souls toward heaven as a priest, will make a serious mistake. But it can happen. It can always be presumed that the confessor or pastor knows his theology on a given point, and the advice or command may be followed. This is especially true for scrupulous persons. However, if a non-scrupulous person has some well-founded doubt about the advice or command given, he should consult some other authority on the matter.

5. *Ignorance due to a lapse of memory*, concerning not a law but a fact. Thus a Catholic may know that he is not allowed to eat meat on Friday under pain of grave sin, and intend always to keep the law. But it can happen that in certain circumstances he will forget that it is Friday, and thus eat meat. His ignorance is temporary and passing, but it leaves him without guilt because he is unaware that he is offending God.

III. BLAMEWORTHY IGNORANCE

This is, in general, the kind of ignorance about moral or spiritual religious matters that could be removed by adequate investigation or study,

and that the ignorant person in some way realizes should be removed. It is called culpable and blameworthy because it makes one guilty in some degree of whatever evil actions or omissions follow upon the ignorance.

Thus the presence of three conditions makes moral or religious ignorance blameworthy: 1) the ignorant person has a serious doubt about the truth of his religious position, or about the goodness or badness of certain actions or omissions; 2) he adverts to the obligation of removing the doubt and ascertaining the truth; 3) he fails to make any investigation to learn the truth.

There are two kinds of blameworthy ignorance. The first is *directly willed ignorance*: the second is *indirectly willed*. Here are explanations and examples of both.

1. Directly Willed Ignorance

This is the kind of ignorance that a person deliberately seeks to maintain, because he wants to feel free from obligations he might learn about if he sought the truth. He knows he is ignorant about certain duties and obligations imposed on him by God or His Church, but he chooses to remain ignorant so that he may feel more free to do what may be a sin. This is often called *affected ignorance*. There are many examples of it in the world.

a. *The ignorance of the learned.* Many very learned men, that is, learned in some science such as physics or astronomy or history or languages, are exceedingly ignorant in regard to religion. They are ignorant because they have never really

studied the subject, but instead have listened to and accepted the flippant dogmas of other so-called learned men who were agnostics or atheists. They are much like David Hume, the famous philosopher of England, who had no room in his system of thought for God, but who is said to have boasted that he had never read the New Testament of the Bible.

Many men who are accepted as learned have read the New Testament and much more about religion. How then do they remain ignorant? The answer is through intellectual pride. They cannot bear the thought of submitting their minds even to truths revealed by God, to say nothing of surrendering their obedience to a Church founded by Christ, but ruled by men. So they choose to remain ignorant.

b. *The ignorance of the doubters.*

There are many men and women who have serious doubts about their standing in regard to God. Some practice no formal religion, but not without the nagging conviction that they should seek and find and practice the true religion. Others belong to one of the religious sects, but not without the ever recurring doubt that it is not the religion founded by God, not the true and full representative of Christ on earth. In short, they have a fairly definite conviction that they should look into the truth of the Catholic Church, because even their slight knowledge of it carries with it a powerful intellectual appeal.

QUITE a number of these crush down their growing sense of responsibility toward the truth under

the impulse of any one of several motives. Some, because they fear the consequences, such as having to give up a second and invalid marriage, or the practice of contraception, or their so-called freedom to forget about other principles of the moral law. Some, because they fear the reaction of their families and friends, and the loss of social standing. Some, because they find it more easy and pleasant to plunge feverishly into worldly activities that keep the thought of religion in the dim background of their minds.

Thus deliberately to prolong ignorance in the presence of serious doubts about one's position and an accompanying sense of responsibility toward the truth is to be guilty of directly willed or affected ignorance.

c. *The ignorance of the secularistic Catholic.* This is the ignorance of those who know that there is a sharp contradiction between the principles of the Church and the principles of the world; who know that they have an obligation to resist the world, and to be loyal to Christ and His Church at any cost: but who make the struggle easier for themselves by choosing not to learn what Christ asks of them in some important moral matter.

A common example of this is to be found in regard to the obligations of marriage. Every married Catholic is attacked by a terrific barrage of pressure from the world in favor of his practicing contraception in one way or another. Few are without at least some realization that Christ, through His infallible Church, has something very definite to say about

this, and that what He says runs counter to what is urged by the world. Some who have such a realization deliberately refuse to seek the knowledge they need to be loyal Catholics. They refuse to ask a priest about the morality of their actions; they refuse to read anything that presents the principles of Catholic morality; they studiously avoid missions and special sermons that would inform them. They plead ignorance, but their ignorance is itself a sin because it is directly willed and affected.

2. Indirectly Willed Ignorance

This is the kind of ignorance that is not sought after directly as a cloak for evil or neglect of recognized responsibility, but that is permitted, through sloth and indifference, to lead to evil. A simple example makes the difference clear.

A careless and recklessly speeding driver of an automobile doesn't really want to kill anybody (those guilty of directly willed or affected ignorance want to do something evil or to escape a responsibility); his guilt is that he failed to think beforehand about the possible and probable consequences of his careless driving. He is truly guilty because he had an obligation to do such thinking, and plenty of facts on which to reach right conclusions. He cannot escape guilt by pleading ignorance, by saying, "I didn't think or I didn't know."

THE same guilt may be incurred in regard to other obligations of religion and morality. Only God can ultimately judge the lightness or

gravity of an individual's sloth in failing to seek and acquire important knowledge that he needs. It is certain that, just as nobody will be condemned to hell for ignorance that was in no way his fault, so nobody will be condemned to hell for ignorance that was only slightly his fault. For slightly culpable ignorance there will be some punishment, as for every venial sin; only for gravely culpable ignorance resulting in grave sins will there be eternal condemnation.

Two examples of what can easily be gravely culpable ignorance because of sloth can readily be given, even though in all cases the actual assessment of guilt must be left to God.

a. *The ignorance of Catholics who make no effort to learn how to answer attacks on their faith.* It is scarcely possible for any Catholic who lives in daily contact with the world around him not to hear or read arguments and statements that purport to disprove the truth of his faith. It is not unusual for Catholics to be misled by such arguments, at least to the point of becoming weak in their faith, at worst to the point of giving it up altogether.

Many such Catholics have been too slothful to add one iota to the knowledge of the catechism they were given as children. Their adult minds need something more than the simplified explanations of the catechism. They need a certain minimum of Catholic reading, of listening to special lectures and sermons, and, in the face of doubts that arise in their

minds, of special inquiry into the point at issue. If they read only secular newspapers and magazines, and hear a great deal of talk against their faith, they have an obligation to look for the facts and truths that would offset secularistic and anti-Catholic propaganda.

Thus many a weak or fallen-away Catholic may want to say, in the face of God's judgment, "I didn't know, I was deceived by false prophets. I believed what I read and heard against my faith." They will hear God say in reply: "You had a mind. And the truth could have been found if you had sought it. You were too lazy, too wrapped up in the world, to seek it. Therefore you are condemned."

b. *The ignorance of those who fail to seek a knowledge of the moral obligations of their state in life.* This may be found in Catholic doctors, who fail to inform themselves on the moral principles that must govern their medical practice; it may be found in married people, who make no effort to settle their doubts about what is right and wrong in marriage; it may be found even in business men, who indulge in some morally doubtful business practice without ever bothering to inquire whether they are doing wrong. None of these may really want to commit sin; their sin lies in the fact that they do not take the time or interest or available means to find out what is a sin in their particular circumstances.

ALL these principles and distinctions may be summed up in the simple statements: 1) God will

condemn no one for ignorance and error (and resulting sins) that he did not deliberately will or cause and of which he remained unaware through no fault of his own. 2) God will condemn those who sinned through ig-

norance of truths that they should have known and could have known, but of which they chose, through malice or fear of consequences or deliberate sloth, to remain in ignorance.

Code of Catholic Conduct

The Taking of Holy Water

Ernest F. Miller, C.S.S.R.

THE first thing that a Catholic does on entering a Catholic church (after the removal of the hat if the entering one be a man, and the putting on of a head-covering if the entering one be a woman) is to dip the fingers of the right hand in the holy water contained in a stoop just inside the door, and make the sign of the cross.

This is a wise and salutary practice. It goes back at least to the fifth century in the history of the Church.

Holy water symbolizes spiritual cleanliness just as *all* water in reality causes physical cleanliness if it is properly applied. The blessing of oneself with holy water is a prod to the will to fight always for purity of soul and body. Water is a reminder to people to keep clean. Holy water is a reminder to people to keep pure.

"Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God," said our Lord in the sermon on the mount. When a person goes into a Catholic church, he is going into the presence of Jesus Christ who is dwelling in the tabernacle of the altar. Therefore, he should be "clean of heart." If he is not "clean of heart" at the moment, the taking of holy water should

move him to make an act of contrition before he gets too far up the aisle and too close to our Lord.

With the holy water on the fingers of the right hand the man makes the sign of the cross on his body. "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." Then he goes to his place in the church.

THE sign of the cross represents and is a reminder of two sublime truths that God revealed to man — the Holy Trinity and the redemption. Catholic churches are built in order to teach the world the meaning of the Holy Trinity and to continue the saving work of the redemption through the sacrifice of the Mass. It is fitting, then, that the sign of the cross be made at the very entrance of the Catholic church. No clearer gesture could be made as to the purpose of the Catholic church.

The sign of the cross should be made carefully and with devotion. To make it in any other way is to commit at least a venial sin. To make it in any other way is to get off to a poor start for the devotions that are to be engaged in in the church.

IN PRAISE OF ST. BLAISE

Adapted from a
Catholic Hour
radio address by

JOSEPH E. MANTON, C.S.S.R.

ST. BLAISE is a saint whose feast day fills our churches but about whose life we know very little. When you go to the books about St. Blaise you come away with nothing but armfuls of legend. After you have snipped off all the frilly lace which sentimental tradition has sewed onto his life you have only a few square inches of fact.

Somewhere about the fourth century, Blaise, a bishop of Armenia, was martyred for the faith, and his festival was kept on February 3. Church historians look down their learned noses with scorn in one eye and amusement in the other at the famous fishbone story that perpetuates his fame. According to this, when a boy got a bone stuck in his throat and was turning blue, who should happen along but Bishop Blaise, who blessed the lad and out popped the bone.

But this is still the remote reason, at least as far as I have been able to find out, why on February 3, Catholics will crowd the altar-rails for the blessing of the throats. In this ceremony the priest will say over every person, "Through the intercession of St. Blaise, bishop and martyr, may the Lord deliver thee from all throat troubles and every other evil," and each person as he tilts his chin and feels the crossed candles touch his neck will breathe a little prayer that St. Blaise will ward off from him everything from laryngitis and tonsillitis and the common cold all the way to cancer.

There is of course absolutely nothing wrong in this, but don't you think St. Blaise himself would feel more flattered if we asked not merely that our throats should be healthy, but also that they should be wholesome and clean — that is, free not only from "chronic respiratory infections" but from conversational indecency? With many throats the danger is pretty remote of the man choking and turning blue, but out of too many throats pour blue stories. Blue? Well, the color isn't too definite. In fact sometimes they are called off-

color stories. But generally they let it go by labeling them just plain dirty.

ISN'T it strange that everyone refers to them as dirty stories? Catholics, Protestants, Jews, atheists with no religion whatever — they all call them dirty stories, as if admitting there was no argument about it. Like dirty water they are just foul and unclean. And yet there is a type of girl who might tell her mother that at the party so-and-so told some stories "that weren't so nice."

But isn't it a pity that we even have to mention dirty stories or double-meaning remarks or immodest talk or suggestive allusions in the same breath as girls or women? Isn't it a little sickening to know that the plague has infected even them? Not, mind you, that there is in God's Bureau of Weights and Measurements a double standard, a different one for men and for women. Sin is sin no matter who commits it. And yet even nature herself, don't you think, seems to have made women more refined, more delicate, more sensitive; and if you were to hear a dirty story from a woman's lips it must give you the same shock as though you bent over to admire a blossom and suddenly behind it a snake uncoiled and reared its poisonous head.

But custom cocaines delicate feelings till they are numb, so that today these dirty stories buzz back and forth between desks in offices like flies shuttling back and forth between garbage cans. They crawl like spiders from bench to bench in factories.

And sometimes at bridge parties they are dealt out as casually as the cards. Why a member of the fair sex would relish or tolerate or encourage such foul allusions in her presence is something of a major mystery. Can any girl actually think it a graceful compliment if anyone tries to tell her a dirty story? This is the very height, the very top of the chimney in black insult, because by the very telling the talker practically says, "Look, there are lots of people to whom I wouldn't tell this story. I'd feel embarrassed, low, cheap, out of place. But you — you don't matter. You're just like the rest of us; dirt is part of your diet and you love it."

It is to marvel how people who want to be decent let the people who ladle out the dirty stories get away with it — in the thin and tissuey name of politeness. We don't want to hurt their feelings, after they have jiggled and stamped and jumped all over ours.

WHY should we fear to offend offensive people? If the gentle Christ drove the cashiers out of the temple with knotted whips, and if the same Christ said that it is what comes out of a man's mouth that defiles a man — must we stand patiently and sweetly as the muddy flood of filthy stories rises round us? You wouldn't let anyone fling a sack of refuse over your living room floor, would you? Then why allow anyone to scatter moral refuse across the floor of your mind? Or to place indecent statuettes in the cabinet of your memory?

There is an ancient rebuttal to all this, but I never could accept it. To me it never quite rang true. That defense is, "But, Father, aren't you exaggerating all this? These dirty stories, I admit, are not pretty. But they don't affect *me*. They just go in one ear and out the other."

That is what is hard to believe. If they just go in one ear and out the other, why let them go in at all? Or do they go in one ear and out the other because there is nothing in between to stop them? Unfortunately, whether there is an intellectual vacuum there, or whether there is a sixteen cylinder brain, it is pretty hard to believe that there is *no* impression made, no effect at all. I would like to offer two reasons why I doubt it.

The first is this. A dredge on a mudscow scooping up mud has its own particular rattle and squish and oozy gulp, and a dirty joke has its own particular kind of laugh. You are not a priest very long till you find that out. You may be going over to the hall to direct a play or some affair and you come upon a group that is unaware that you are nearby. You don't do anything to conceal your coming; they just don't notice. And then suddenly you hear this strange loud laugh, a sort of bursting guffaw, something about it primitive and raw. Then they see you right in their midst and silence comes down upon the crowd like a stovolid. A strained silence with everybody embarrassed.

But they don't have to tell you what's been going on, the kind of humor they've been sniggering at. They've already told you — by their

laugh. Why is the laugh different? You call this not making an impression? If it were decent humor the laugh would be clear and merry and innocent, but if it is sex with a new twist, that is something else again. When there is dirt in the story, there is gravel in the laugh.

AND about that going in one ear and out the other, let me tell you a little incident by way of parable.

It sounds like something out of Ripley but once I knew an ear specialist who practiced in Erie, Pennsylvania, and whose name was even Doctor Heard. (He's dead now, Lord rest him.) But this particular day I ran into him and he was shaking his head over a case he had had that morning. Seems that several days before a young lad had been mowing his lawn and an insect had flown into the boy's ear. Well, this does happen now and then, but generally the frightened insect takes the nearest escalator and is very happy to come right out. But this particular insect got frightened or something and chose the boy's ear as a kind of incubator in which to lay its eggs. With the heat of the boy's body the eggs hatched, and in a few days the boy was almost insane with torture. When the doctor went in, he found the inner ear writhing with crawling grubs.

Isn't that a picture of the dirty story? It may enter your ear all alone, but once in, it may breed many unchaste imaginings, improper desires, indecent daydreams, perhaps unclean deeds. Why not? Whatever

goes into the human brain, *that* is what will come out of the brain by way of thoughts — and acts.

A magician may take a black silk hat, put into it a green scarf and pull out of it a white rabbit — but you know that is all a trick. You cannot do that with your mind. You cannot put unclean stories into the human mind and expect it to bring clean thoughts out. Every man's skull is his own little theatre, and if he rents his films from Dirty Stories, Incorporated, those are the pictures that his mind's eye is going to see.

HUMORISTS who cannot be funny find out they have to be filthy — because they are not really humorists. They have minds that are tethered to one theme, and no matter how they move about they never get away from it.

They would have you regard a relation that is personal and sacred as merely animal and casual. They frame their cynical regard of the marriage bond into a slimy anecdote which may first arouse blatant laughter, later on (with enough stories) develop into an amused tolerance, and then go on to secret approval, and finally even become the accepted pattern of conduct.

Do not ideas have an impact? And does not repetition have its effect like a hammer which, *blow after blow*, drives in the nail?

And what a tragic misuse it all is of the precious gift of speech! Not long ago I was called to the hospital to attend a boy who had just been placed on the D.L. — The Danger-

ous List. He was a clean-cut looking lad, about ten years old, with bright blue eyes and curly hair. When I bent over and spoke to him, he just looked at me. He strained as if trying to speak but nothing came out. I went into the corridor and asked the nurse. She said, "Lockjaw. And he's dying." For confession all he could do was answer my simple questions by shaking his head yes or no. After I had anointed him and said some prayers aloud, I had to leave him, but as I walked down the hospital steps I could not help thinking. Here was this wholesome innocent boy and he could not move his lips even to whisper, "My Jesus, mercy," and at that very hour all over the city, in bar-rooms and factories and restaurants and cars, hundreds were abusing the precious gift of speech with smutty stories and vile talk!

ON my way home I chanced to pass a doorway where a policeman was indignantly telling off the housewife because the garbage can in the yard was without a lid.

"Lady," he said, "don't you know there's a law that all garbage cans have to be covered? Spreads disease!" And I felt like praying that almighty God would make a law that all mouths that spread moral contagion should be forever covered.

May the blessing of St. Blaise be not merely upon our throats for health but upon our throats for elementary holiness so that we may speak only as befits men and women who are the children of God and the brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ!

Problems of Professional People

Reporting a Fellow Employee's Dishonesty

PROBLEM: In the factory in which I am employed there is a worker who is dishonest, particularly in reporting the amount of time he spends on overtime work. For example, he will put in a claim for payment for four hours of work in the evening, although he will spend half of the time in studying for his classes in a school he is attending. Or, he will put in a claim for an hour's work more than he actually stayed in the factory. He takes care not to cheat in this way when the foreman is around. My problem is this: Am I obliged in conscience to report this man to the employer, since he evidently is getting money from the firm unjustly? I might add that this man professes to be a good Catholic and goes to Mass and receives the sacraments regularly, despite his dishonesty.

ANSWER: The individual described by our correspondent exemplifies a type of the inconsistent Catholic, a person who fulfils some requirements of his religion, such as attendance at Mass and reception of the sacraments, but does not hesitate to transgress God's law by sins of dishonesty. If these sins are committed very frequently, the amount of money stolen from the firm would soon be sufficiently large to constitute a serious sin.

However, the problem of our correspondent concerns his own obligation to do something about the situation. Is he bound in conscience to report the dishonesty of his fellow worker to his employer? There are some who would say without any qualification that he is obliged to report the matter in order to protect his employer from injustice; oth-

ers would be equally decisive in denying such an obligation, on the ground that it is none of his business.

The correct answer lies between these two extremes. An employee whose job includes supervision over his fellow employees, such as a foreman or a man appointed to check on the hours of work put in by the workers, is bound to see that they do not cheat, and if he finds them to be dishonest he must report them, unless he can correct their fault himself. For the foreman or supervisor is bound in justice to protect the interests of his employer in the particular portion of the job assigned to him.

But the worker who has no supervisory capacity has no obligation in justice to prevent or to report the misdeeds of his fellow employees. He might, however, have such an obligation in charity — that is, if it would not entail great harm or inconvenience to himself. Thus, he would not have to report another man's dishonesty if he might have to suffer a severe beating from this latter. If, however, the amount of losses coming to the firm is considerable, and he has no reason to fear any great harm or trouble to himself, he should make known to his employer or to some reliable member of the firm that dishonesty is going on. If he felt that he would put an end to the abuse by admonishing the guilty party, he should first attempt this means of correcting the situation.

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What Books Are Catholics Forbidden to Read

?

Perhaps the most important feature of the prohibition of certain books on the part of the Catholic Church is that it is directed to the common sense and the free will of Catholics. Once a Catholic, no one can be forced to remain a Catholic. So, too, there is no force exerted on Catholics by any law ever made by the Church other than its appeal to his common sense, to his understanding of the authority behind the law, and his concern for his own immortal soul.

HERBERT A. SEIFERT, C.S.S.R.

THE legislation of the Catholic Church in regard to the censorship and prohibition of books and other publications is a subject that is frequently discussed and often impugned. We can readily understand how people without faith or moral standards can regard all censorship as an intolerant restraint upon liberty. But much of the criticism of the Church's laws concerning reading matter, is, we believe, the result of ignorance or misconception of the scope and purpose of the laws. The true Catholic will obey the laws of the Church, for he realizes that the Church is opposed not to liberty but to license. She is intolerant only of error and sin. The prudent gardener uproots noxious weeds to save his growing plants; the skillful surgeon cuts off the gangrened leg to save the patient's life.

Every law, human and divine, is, in a sense, a restriction of freedom; or more correctly it is a means of preventing license. License is the abuse of liberty and there is no domain in which license is so rampant as in the field of thought. Apparently there are no limits to the vagaries of the human mind and they are constantly finding expression through the medium of harmful writings. To restrict this evil and to protect the ignorant from the fatal consequences of harmful reading the Church has made sane and simple laws for all her subjects.

When this subject is brought up most people think at once of the official list or catalogue of prohibited books and their authors, published by the Church for the guidance of the faithful. However this list or *In-*

dex as it is popularly called, is only a part of the legislation of the Church with regard to forbidden literature. Judging from questions asked by many Catholics it is not generally known or recognized that there is also a law of God implied in this matter and that there are other laws of the Church to be considered when there is question of forbidden books. Hence if a Catholic were to say that a certain book or periodical may be read because it is not named in the Index that Catholic would show little knowledge of the entire law. The Index was never intended to be a complete list of forbidden literature.

We propose therefore to treat this subject in a practical way so that the average Catholic may understand the law more clearly and have a more intelligent appreciation of its purpose.

AS CHRIST'S representative, the Church is bound by divine right and authority to concern herself with everything that even remotely affects the salvation of souls. She is the guardian of the faith and morals of her children. This office must be exercised by the enactment of reasonable laws to protect her children from the evil influence of the powers of darkness and the destroyer of souls.

Those who carp at her laws in regard to forbidden literature seem to be unaware that the prohibition to read certain literature is a very ancient practice and was in use even before the Christian era. It was in vogue among the Jews before the Babylonian Captivity. According to the pagan historian Livy, it was the

duty of magistrates, in the early days of the Roman empire, to forbid literature that was in any way harmful to its citizenry. Censorship was exercised from the very beginning of the Christian Church. The Ephesian converts, according to the nineteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, burned their books on magic at the command of St. Paul, though the value of the books amounted to fifty thousand pieces of silver. The councils of the Church through the centuries have forbidden certain literature and ordered many books to be burned. Possibly the earliest condemnation was made by the Council of Nice, in 325, of the book called *Thalia*, written by the heretic Arius.

Even governments have realized their duty and their right of censoring and prohibiting certain reading for the welfare of their people. Just as the state is bound to safeguard the public health by combating epidemics with strict laws, by isolating people afflicted with contagious diseases, by restricting the sale of narcotics and poison, so she is bound to safeguard public mental and moral health by forbidding the spread of poisonous reading matter.

It is a great pity that the state does not take this obligation more seriously. Would anyone be so rash as to say that the state has no right to forbid the sale of Communistic literature that tends to overthrow our government? Has the state no authority to root out, to fine and imprison those degenerates who are selling narcotics even to our teen-agers?

During times of crisis governments go to extreme limits in the exercise of censorship. In time of war the governments of all nations carefully guard the public press. Even the private correspondence of soldiers and wards of the state is subjected to the closest scrutiny.

THE Church is always at war with heresy, superstition, immorality and irreligion. She has been entrusted by her divine Founder with the duty of carrying on that war until the end of time and she will use every means in her power to fight the enemies of our salvation, even though it is necessary to restrict our liberty or to work a hardship on certain individuals.

People of mature years are not immune to the evil influence of harmful literature. The advocates of modern paganism are fully aware that a steady diet of irreligious or immoral books — or plays or pictures for that matter — will sooner or later destroy the faith or the morals of the most ardent Christians. Now if bad books promote irreligion and immorality, if witnessing dangerous plays will do harm to the cause of Christian virtue, it is evident that the Church has not only the right but the serious duty of using her supreme authority to forbid her children to read such literature or to witness such performances.

Protective measures of this nature are not unjust, arbitrary or intolerant. No more than if a parent forbids a child to take poison or bring

it into the home, to read dangerous magazines, to play with firearms, to associate with dangerous companions or see harmful plays, motion pictures or television programs.

In the early days of the Church evil doctrines were less harmful than they are today because books were few and their circulation very limited. But with the advent of the printing press new conditions arose; books multiplied and spread rapidly. The prohibition of dangerous books then became a necessity. At first this was done only by local bishops, church councils and universities. In places where there was union of Church and state the prohibition would be enforced by the civil power.

In the sixteenth century the Congregation of the Index was established by Pope Pius V as the highest authority in the Church to censor and prohibit, if necessary, various types of literature. This congregation consisted of a number of cardinals and learned theologians whose special duty it was to examine books and publications of a questionable nature and to decide whether they should be forbidden or not.

SOME forty years ago the work of the Congregation of the Index was given to the Congregation of the Holy Office which is the official council of the Pope for the safeguarding of faith and morals. Besides the Congregation of the Holy Office, all bishops, abbots and superiors general of religious orders or congregations have the authority to forbid harmful books for those under

their charge. In order that they may be able to fulfill this important duty, all the faithful, but especially priests, have the obligation in conscience of reporting the names of books and their authors that are clearly doing harm in any way.

According to the laws of the Church, books on religious subjects by Catholic authors must first receive ecclesiastical approbation. This is generally indicated at the beginning of the book by such words as *cum permissu superiorum* (with the permission of the superiors), or *nihil obstat* (nothing objectionable), or *imprimatur*, *imprimi potest* (it may be printed).

It is extremely important to remember that the Index of prohibited literature (in which the titles and authors of certain books are named) is not the most important or far-reaching of the laws of the Church about dangerous books and other publications. She has made more general laws, binding on all Catholics, which are based on the natural law and the commandments—namely our obligation of avoiding occasions of sin in order to safeguard our faith and morals. These general laws prohibit innumerable books and periodicals that have never been expressly forbidden by any authority of the Church.

There are various classes of books which Catholics are forbidden (without express permission) to read, retain in their possession, sell, translate or in any way make known to oth-

ers. Any book that comes under one of these headings is a forbidden book whether it has been condemned by name or not.

The classes of books thus prohibited are the following:

1. Editions of the Bible published or edited by non-Catholics.
2. Books that defend heresy, or schism, or that attack the very foundations of religion.
3. Books that expressly attack religion or good morals.
4. Books written by non-Catholics that expressly treat of religion, unless it is clear that there is nothing contrary to Catholic faith in them.
5. Books that impugn or ridicule Catholic dogmas, or defend errors condemned by the Holy See, or deride divine worship, or attempt to overthrow ecclesiastical discipline, or that expressly attack the hierarchy of the Church or the clerical or religious state.
7. Books that teach or recommend superstition, fortune-telling, spiritism or similar occult beliefs or practices.
8. Books that defend duelling, suicide or divorce as licit, or that maintain that Masonic orders and similar societies are not harmful to both Church and civil society.
9. Books that expressly treat of, narrate or teach lascivious and obscene things.
10. Books on liturgy that contain unauthorized changes from the prescription of the Church.
11. Books that publish false indulgences or those that have been revoked by the Church.

Any book or publication that falls under any one of these headings may not be kept in one's possession, or read, sold or translated by a Catholic without special permission from the proper authority. For example, the Protestant Bible is a book forbidden to Catholics. We have our own Bible approved and recommended for our use. The daily reading of the Bible is looked upon the same as an indulgenced prayer.

BESIDES the many books and periodicals that are forbidden by these general laws, there is, as has been mentioned, a published list of particular works that have been expressly condemned by the Church. Many, even educated people, read and keep such books, who are ignorant of the censure or prohibition of the Church. The catalogue of names of authors and their works is commonly called the Index. The list of prohibited authors and titles is comparatively small. Sometimes an author's entire output of books is forbidden, though not all are contrary to faith or morals. This is done because so many of them are objectionable or because the author, if a Catholic especially, has failed to make the corrections suggested and therefore all his works are forbidden, as a penalty. Much the same as one would boycott a drugstore because the owner persists in selling liquor to minors, narcotics to teen-agers or salacious magazines to high school students.

It is not difficult to obtain a complete list of all the works on the

Catholic Index. One of the very latest books on the subject "What is the Index" — by Rev. R. A. Burke, C.S.V., Bruce Publishing Co., contains the entire catalogue. Books not mentioned by name on the Index, as well as magazines, periodicals, etc., must be judged according to the general laws mentioned above. For that reason when a Catholic is in doubt about a certain book or publication, he should consult a priest or an approved list of books that a Catholic may read and keep in his home without harm to his religion or virtue. THE LIGUORIAN magazine often has a list of books suitable for adults only — a list for discriminating adults and a list of such books as are not recommended for any readers.

SOMETIMES it is said that the strict laws of the Church in this regard make for narrowness and ignorance on the part of Catholics. It is said that Catholics would be stronger in their faith if they were permitted to read what is said against their faith, or again that there are many Catholics who would not be harmed by such literature.

The answer to these and similar objections is twofold. 1) The Church bases her laws in this matter on nineteen centuries of experience of human nature and when she forbids certain literature she does it only because she knows it is dangerous. All laws are necessarily made for the common good. 2) In particular cases she readily grants permission to certain individuals to read such books

and periodicals if there is a sufficient reason to do so. This permission can be obtained from the bishop through the pastor or confessor.

The Church is not afraid of her enemies nor their books; she will permit anyone to read their literature and answer them who shows himself capable. But for the safety of those who have not studied deeply in matters of faith, who are not capable of discovering errors against it, she continues to enforce her laws. It is for their sake that the laws were made.

What has been said so far applies to all Catholics, whatever their state or education may be. The common objections we so often hear are: "I see no harm in the book even though it is forbidden," or again, "Such books do not affect my faith or virtue," or "We must be broadminded and consider both sides of the question," or "I read only for enjoyment."

These and similar objections are more specious than logical. The Church is wiser in her judgment than the so-called children of light.

The experience of the centuries has taught her sorrowfully that countless numbers have read themselves out of the faith or into lives of error and sin.

READING is still the greatest power for good or evil in the world today. There are uncounted thousands of Catholics who, as they say, "simply must read the modern best sellers," no matter how irreligious or immoral they are. But these same Catholics have never read a chapter of the best sellers of all time—the Bible and the Imitation of Christ. They do not even possess these wonderful books though they spend hundreds of dollars a year on dangerous literature.

Our Catholic magazines lead a precarious existence while positively harmful literature is sold out soon after it appears. While there are unnumbered good books and magazines to read, to build up our faith and preserve our moral standards in this decadent age, there should be no difficulty for Catholics of good will to observe the very wise legislation of the Church in regard to their reading.

Last Kick!

An American military cemetery just outside Paris honors among its heroes a mule named Maggie.

The inscription on her tombstone reads:

"Here lies the mule Maggie. In her life she kicked two generals, eight colonels, eight captains, sixteen lieutenants, five hundred and forty-one enlisted men and one German mine."

Special subscription and renewal offer on back cover!

For Wives and Husbands Only

Husbands' Night Out

Donald F. Miller, C.S.S.R.

Problem: My husband insists (and he quotes many other husbands as backing him up) that he deserves one night a week out "with the boys." I realize that everybody needs relaxation, but I am wondering just how far this thing goes. My husband is a salesman, who travels quite a bit, spends many an evening with his customers, attends monthly dinners and other affairs of the business organization that he works for. Over and above all that, he keeps quoting his right to one night a week with the boys. We are married twelve years and have five children. I do not have the means, opportunities, energy or time for activities outside my home. The raising of our family entails many anxious moments and countless worries. But spending the evening with my husband is a wonderful form of relaxation for me. Am I wrong in objecting to this "night out" principle, which is put forward almost as if it were a part of the marriage contract?

Solution: For the benefit of any husbands who may read this, it may be stated flatly that there is no such thing as a universal principle to the effect that every husband must have "a night out with the boys" every week of the year, regardless of consideration for his wife and family.

There is a general principle to the effect that everybody — and that includes both husbands and wives — needs a certain amount of relaxation. The ideal thing is for both husband and wife to seek this needed recreation together, whether by spending evenings quietly at home, or playing cards with friends, or sharing

amusements together. If, however, a husband has got himself to the sorry point where he thinks he can relax only by taking a night out "with the boys" every week, then he is bound to see to it that his wife has an equal chance for relaxation on her own, even at the price of staying home with the children himself on occasions when the wife has a chance to get away for a while. There can be no greater selfishness than that of the husband who insists on his own recreation, without ever considering that his wife needs recreation too. Such selfish husbands ignore the fact that they owe real consideration for their wives who have the care of the children from dawn to bed-time. If this consideration means giving up a cherished "night out a week," a decent husband will make no fuss over it at all.

FOR the wives whose husbands demand their regular nights out, and leave them alone with the worries of the family, we say: It is not easy to make a man grow up when he is acting like a selfish child. It is hard to gain anything by insisting on rights, by nagging at such a husband, by grumbling and complaining. Selfishness usually grows when it meets with opposition. The most effective course is to try to be a better wife and companion; to smother the tendency to complain; to make the home more and more attractive, and to suggest ways of relaxing in which both husband and wife can share. Marriage is always "for better, for worse;" what turns out to be worse than expected can be made better, not by nagging, quarrelling and complaining, but only by greater sacrifice and a greater manifestation of love.

JOHN N. McCORMICK, C.S.S.R.

JOHN A. TREINEN, C.S.S.R.

THE MASS---

MY CONSECRATION

On the cross our Lord was looking forward to you to carry on His sacrifice, hoping that you would give yourself to Him at the moment of consecration in the Mass.

ONE of the most thrilling, beautiful and heroic scenes that I have ever been privileged to witness is that of the consecration of a young lady to Christ — the scene of a nun's religious profession. The entire consecration is spread between two ceremonies; between the two is interposed the period of her novitiate. She enters the chapel for the first time clothed as a lovely bride, white-robed, veiled, carrying a gorgeous bouquet in her arms. She comes forth for the second time a somber nun, clothed in black, her body entirely garmented except for her face. She has almost lost her identity, even to the extent of changing her name.

Now she is called Sister.

But the sister of whom? The sister of Him Who is called the First-

born of all the brethren, our Brother, Jesus Christ. The human being has suffered a mystical death; there is born of that act of consecration a new being, a spouse and lover of the divine Christ.

This act of consecration of a nun, this transformation usually takes place during holy Mass. It is a sacrifice within a sacrifice: a small Calvary erected side by side with the mystic Calvary of Christ.

Why Is This Done at Mass?

THIS act of consecration and change, this transformation takes place at Mass because it is through the Mass that each of us can and must be changed into the likeness of Christ. Through the Mass we must put on Christ that we may be able to say: "I live, now not I, but Christ lives in me." And this transformation of us into Christ can be effected only by suffering and by sacrifice.

In the Mass the lifeless forms of bread and wine receive a new being.

They are changed, transubstantiated, consecrated so that they become a new and divine substance at the very moment that the Mass is completed and effected. For the words of consecration have a double office: they change the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ and by that same act they accomplish the act of sacrifice.

On the cross Christ willed the separation of His blood from His body to the very last drop, and because He was of our flesh, death was the normal result. We can almost hear Him say as He hangs upon the cross: "Father, this is My body; this is My blood. They are now separated from one another as a reparation for the separation of humanity from Thee by sin." The scourge, the thorns, the nails of the executioners and the lance were but the tools of this death and this sacrifice on the cross.

IN THE Mass, as also at the last supper, that sacrifice of the cross is repeated and renewed. The last supper, the cross and the Mass are the same sacrifice, differently offered and presented to the divine Father. In all three the high priest, Who assisted at the table of the last supper, upon the tree of the cross, and now at the altar of the Mass is the same — Christ. Only here at the Mass, Christ acts and speaks in the person of the priest: "This is My body." In all three the victim offered is the same: It is Jesus Christ at the table of the last supper under the appearances of bread and wine; on the cross

under the form of a broken, bleeding victim, and in the Mass under the forms of bread and wine.

In all three the purposes of the sacrifice are the same: to honor and glorify God by making Him a worthy gift, a divine gift; to show man's gratitude to God by returning to Him a gift of infinite value for all His gifts; to satisfy and repair for all men's sins by a divine victim offered in man's place; and to plead for grace and blessings for soul and body.

The Mystical Sacrifice

ONLY the actual manner of the offering and sacrifice differs at the last supper and the Mass from that of Calvary and the cross. As on the cross the separation of the blood of Christ from His sacred body effected the sacrifice that redeemed the world, so in the Mass the mystical representation of this separation of the blood from the body of Christ effects this sacrifice.

Since Christ has risen from the dead and since His body is glorified, Christ can die really no more. *Death hath no more dominion over Him.* His body and blood upon our altars are His glorified body and blood now enthroned on the right hand of His heavenly Father, so that now there is offered to the Father a mystical representation of the death of Christ, a reminder to the heavenly Father that Christ was once on the cross and is still on the altar the victim once slain for us.

In the Mass the body and the blood are mystically separated; not

indeed, by the scourges, the nails and lance, but by the consecrating words of the priest. At Christ's command the priest performs separate consecrations. Over the bread he says: *This is My body*. Then over the chalice of wine the priest says: *This is My blood*.

By the separate consecrations, through the mystic lance and nails of the consecrating words, the body and blood are symbolically but not actually separated, and the separation on Calvary is re-presented. By the words and intention and action by which the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ, the sacrifice of the Mass is accomplished.

Our Part in the Sacrifice

BUT IS Christ, the Head of the mystical body, the only one who is consecrated, the only one who is sacrificed on the altar in the Mass? Is the Mass His sacrifice and His alone? No, indeed! We are inseparably united to Christ by grace into the unity of His mystical body; He is the vine and we are the branches, as members of His mystical body, we must do whatever the Head does if we are to be worthy members of the Head. The words of consecration then have a double significance; they refer both to the Head and the members of the mystical body; to Christ and to us.

At the offertory of the Mass we presented our gifts to God under the appearances of bread and wine and also ourselves under the symbols of

bread and wine as the supports of the life of our body. At our baptism we were changed into members of Christ; we were born again of water and the Holy Ghost; we began to share in the life of Christ through sanctifying grace. But Christ did not endow us with this dignity merely to honor and ennoble us. He did it in order that we might live and act and work in and with Him, especially that we might love and suffer and sacrifice ourselves with Him. He gave us this share in His own life that we might be able to say now at the moment of consecration: "Here too is My body; here too is My blood."

At the moment of consecration we must have a strong faith in our glorious dignity as members of Christ. We must realize that we too, even as the bread and wine, are consecrated into the spirit of Christ and changed into His members.

CONSEQUENCES of a sacrificial nature follow from our consecration into Christians. If the words of consecration apply to us insofar as they reassert our oneness in and with Christ, they apply to us too insofar as they demand that we have a part in the sacrifice which those words effect and accomplish. At the consecration of the Mass our Lord is saying to you: "You, Mary, you John, and James and Ann and Teresa, give Me your body and your blood. Give Me your whole self. I can suffer no more. I have filled up the sufferings of My physical body, but I have not filled up the sufferings of My mystical body. I can suf-

fer no more. But now you may and must carry out My injunction: 'Take up your cross and follow Me. Fill up those things that are wanting in My Passion.'

Three Ways to Sacrifice Yourself

ON THE cross our Lord was looking forward to you to carry on His sacrifice, hoping that you would give yourself to Him at the moment of consecration. In the consecration of the Mass that hope of our Lord for you is fulfilled, if only you will live up to it.

How can you take part in the sacrifice that is implied in the consecration? By the actual separation of your blood from your body? Some have been called to take that part in the Mass—that is the way the martyrs lived the Mass long ago in Rome. That is also the way today for the martyrs of Russia and China. That is the way the heroic saints who mortified their bodies unto the shedding of blood have taken their part in the Mass.

And there are hundreds of such saints in the world today, reliving the Mass in their sacrificial lives. If this way is not for you then you may and must have part in the consecration-service without ascending the heights of such a real and heroic Calvary. You can do so in three ways.

Separation from Sin

FIRST, you must realize that you cannot preserve this divine life, this membership in Christ's mystical body save at the price of sacrifice. A readiness to sacrifice the sin, the

evil, the vicious passions in you and in the world is the first way to live in Christ. "They who are Christ's have crucified their flesh with its vices and its concupiscences."

When greed for wealth would make us dishonest, we must separate that greed from our hearts; when passion for pleasure would tempt us to impurity and intemperance, we must separate this passion from our hearts; when bitterness towards others draws us to hatred, we must separate that bitterness from our souls; when desire for social position and prestige would make us defiant of God's law, we must separate our hearts from that desire; when the friendship of men is a barrier to the friendship of Christ, we must divorce ourselves from the affection of men.

We must die to the evil in us and in the world; that is our first part in the sacrifice of Christ. But it is only the beginning, not yet the end; it brings us only to the foot of Calvary, not to the peak. It is only our birth, not yet our adulthood.

Carrying the Cross

SECONDLY, this divine beginning of Christ in us, this grace must grow, it must not remain stagnant and sterile; we must not always remain children in grace but must grow to adulthood. "If any man will be My disciple, let him take up his cross daily and follow Me." Living and growing in this life of Christ, then, means the carrying of the cross.

Anyone who imagines that it is easy to be a true member of Christ's

mystical body, a genuine Catholic, has not really tried to be a real Catholic as yet, has no realization of the meaning of the word *Christian*. It is not easy to practice the charity and the meekness and the consideration of Christ toward others, even to the sacrifice of self. Ask Father Damien, martyr of the lepers; ask foreign missionaries, ask sisters who wear out young lives for Christ in schools, hospitals, orphanages; ask mothers and fathers of families who see in their children other Christs and in their own duties those of other Marys and Josephs. Ask those who seek to live united to Christ their Head in a life of prayer; those whom you find at daily Mass and Communion, in their daily visit to Christ in the Eucharist, who force themselves to find time for their daily rosary, for their daily stations during Lent. Ask those who strive to keep the laws of fasting and abstinence which the Church of Christ lays down for them. Ask those who set up Christ as the ideal and model of their actions, who try in their daily lives, in the little actions of each hour to act as He would act. They will tell you that being true to those words of consecration which they pronounce over themselves at the consecration, "This too is my body, this too is my blood," demands that they take up their cross daily and follow Him.

Suffering

FINALLY, living the Mass means never wasting suffering but always being good stewards of the trials God gives us. There is hardly anything so tragic in the world as

wasted pain. Think of how much suffering there is in hospitals, among the poor and the bereaved! Think how much of that suffering goes to waste. How many, or rather how few, of those lonesome, suffering, abandoned, crucified souls are saying with our Lord at the moment of consecration: "This is my body, take it."

And yet that is what we all should be saying at that second. "Here is my body, take it; here is my blood, take it. Here is my soul, my will, my energy, my strength, my property, my wealth — all that I have. It is Thine. Take it. Consecrate it. Offer it. Offer it with Thyself to the heavenly Father in order that looking down on the great sacrifice, He may see only Thee, His beloved. Son in Whom He is well pleased. Change this poor bread of my pain and sorrow into Thy divine life. Thrill the wine of my wasted life into the divine Spirit; unite my broken heart with Thy warm heart; turn my cross into a crucifix. Let not my abandonment, my sorrow, my bereavement go to waste. As the drop of water is absorbed by the wine at the offertory of the Mass, let my life be absorbed in Thine."

•

"As Thy great St. Gertrude used to take her life, her heart, her body and soul and mind and all, and drop them into the chalice at the moment of the offertory as a drop of water and pray Thee to change all into Thyself at the consecration of the Mass—so do I drop my life and all

into the chalice of Thy Sacred Heart that I may be changed truly into Thee. Consecrate these trials of my life which would go unrewarded unless united to Thee. Transubstantiate me, so that like the bread which is now Thy body and the wine which is now Thy blood, I too may be wholly Thine.

"I CARE not if the appearances remain, if like the bread and wine after the consecration, I seem to all earthly eyes the same as before. My station in life, my routine, my work, my family — all these are but the external appearances of my

life which remain unchanged. But the substance of my life, by my love for Thee, by my spirit of sacrifice, by my union with Thee in the Mass — my soul, my mind, my will, my heart — transubstantiate them wholly, transform them entirely into Thy service. Thus finally, when I make the last act of sacrifice on my bed of death, it may be made in union with Thee in the Mass. And then the first words that I shall hear in eternity will be spoken by Thy sweet lips over me as I lie in Thy eternal embrace: 'This is My body; this is My blood, made one with Me in the sacrifice of the Mass.'"

DIZZY WITH JOY

Greed is much more general in the world today than we suspect. It once was monopolized by the avaricious rich, now it is shared by the envious poor. Its branches are taprooted in the visible, sensual and external. It is entirely concerned with the earning of bread and butter, meat and potatoes, shirts and shorts, the new look in porch-gliders, pastel-painted bungalows, suburban, restricted zone living. It is wholly in love with fun and frolic, dancing and dining, partying and vacationing. Such greed is ruinous for man principally because it hardens the heart.

Man becomes like unto that which he loves, and if he loves gold, he becomes like it, cold and hard. The more he gets, the more he believes he needs. He is always poorer in his own eyes. The sense of the spiritual becomes deadened and the providence of God becomes less and less a reality. The greatest misfortune is that now he can do without God, for how can his heart be warmed with the thought of heaven, when this world dizzies him with so many joys?

Father Hackett, C. P., in *Information*

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SIDEGLANCES

By the Bystander

Dancing Parties for
Grade School Children

A letter from a deeply concerned mother inspires this "extension of remarks" (as United States Congressmen preface some of the elaborate discussions they have printed in the *Congressional Record*) on a subject that was treated rather briefly in THE LIGURIAN of August, 1956. The topic was "Mixed Parties in Grade School." We were referring to mixed dancing parties arranged for seventh and eighth grade children, sometimes by their parents in the P.T.A., sometimes by school authorities themselves. We quoted the arguments used by parents and others in favor of such dances: that they train the children in social graces and correct dancing early in life, save them from being wall-flowers later on, etc. Then we stated that these advantages are far outweighed by the dangers to which they give rise. We briefly outlined the dangers and let it go at that.

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THE letter referred to above makes us realize that more needs to be said on this topic. Let us quote snatches from it: "My husband and I agreed with your article on mixed parties in grade school, but

we thought it was needed by other parents — not us. We don't believe in children's dating while they are in grade school and early high school, so that was that. Then came the revolution. We attended a P.T.A. meeting at our school, in which we have a seventh grader, and were glibly informed that a dance would be held for the seventh and eighth graders on a certain night, the first of a regular series being planned. I wrote to the superior of the school, quoting your article and also one in our diocesan Catholic paper against such dances, but got no answer. This is only the beginning. Another parish school in our city has dances for the sixth, seventh and eighth graders. Another has a 'Co-ed club' for sixth, seventh and eighth graders, with weekly dances. When I told my twelve-year-old daughter that she was not going to any of these dances, she flashed a Catholic magazine published for children before my face in which occasional dating, dancing and 'hand-holding' were practically approved for kids not yet in their teens, and even 'kissing' was lightly tossed off as not a very serious problem for such youngsters. Who in the name of all that's good, gives permission for such tripe to be beamed to grammar

school youngsters? If a sister is responsible for these answers, she is really naive! Think of sixth graders discussing dates, dancing and kissing with their classmates first, and then waving the magazine under mama's nose to prove to her that she is just an old fogey! We have five children under twelve, and are deeply concerned about this problem. It has already been suggested by some of the P.T.A. mothers in our group that, because we won't let our daughter attend their dances, she must be untrustworthy. Isn't it time that storm warnings be issued on this subject?"

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THERE are some mothers and fathers (and probably some naive school sisters) who will scoff at any "storm warnings" we raise on this subject as the unrealistic worries of a pessimist and an alarmist. They present a battery of reasons for sponsoring grade school and early high school dances, none of which could be argued against if they gave a true and complete picture of the consequences of such parties. "We want our children to learn gracefulness of movement, and dancing is an excellent means of training them to be graceful. We want our boys to get along well with girls, and our girls to get along well with boys, and dancing trains them to like and respect one another. We want our children to have an innocent good time, and our well-chaperoned dances are a lot of fun for them."

For mothers and fathers who absolutely refuse to look more deeply into this matter than those who present such arguments, it is probably

hopeless to offer another side of the picture. But, as the above-quoted letter indicates, there are many mothers and fathers who have been and are uneasy about grade school dances, and others who are still open to conviction on one side or the other. For them we present the following thoughts. The thoughts are not spun from an ivory tower, far removed from the realities of life. We have preached scores of retreats to high school youngsters; have talked to hundreds of them about their problems; in some matters we know more about them than their parents will ever know.

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FIRST, a few words about dancing. We are speaking here about such dances as bring a boy and girl into modest bodily contact and keep them there throughout the length of the dance, and in several succeeding dances. We are not referring to tap-dancing, or gymnastic dancing, the steps or movements of which a girl or a boy may profitably learn and practice at any age alone. Dancing, as we take it here, that is, physical contact between a boy and a girl accompanied by rhythmic movements, has never been considered in Catholic morality to be entirely free from moral danger. Apart entirely from sinful dancing, (marked by tight bodily contact, with passion-provoking movements) even good dancing can and often does give rise to temptations. There is the temptation to want to get closer and closer to one's dancing partner, which, though it may be resisted in public, too often seeks indulgence in private.

There is also the fact that dancing together often causes a couple to fall in love, so that they want to be together and to dance together more and more, to become, as it were, "steady partners." This is all to the good in mature persons who are in a position to think about getting married. Innocent dancing has led to many a courtship that in turn led to a happy marriage. The point is, however, that a certain maturity of age and character is necessary to neutralize or even to turn into good the dangers that are attendant on dancing. Maturity is necessary to help a person resist the temptation to seek closer and closer contact with a dancing partner. It is also necessary to make "falling in love" and "steady company-keeping" a good thing.

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WE know that someone may quickly say here that these dangers don't apply to grade school children at all. First of all, they will say, such children are as yet unaware of passion and the stirrings of sexual emotion. Why deprive them of the fun of dancing because of theoretical temptations they are not old enough to experience? This is really an "ivory tower" point of view. It is very possible to force an interest in sex as such on a child long before this would have naturally arisen. But even when, fortunately, this interest is not awakened prematurely by frequent dancing, such regular dancing can and does intensify the awakening when it does come with the advent of puberty.

In both cases, the problems the child will face are fearfully compli-

cated by the attitude of the world around it. Already corrupted children talk to them about their knowledge of and experiences in sex. Few children entirely escape seeing some of the lewd pictures or booklets that are so wide-spread today. Kissing advertisements on television and billboards set a kind of pattern for them. Sexy jokes are overheard, either from their elders or their friends. And their own fallen human nature begins to yearn for just the things that the pagan world makes so attractive.

We feel strongly that a very important part of the chain of events that makes a youngster's battle for purity unnaturally difficult is the short-sighted policy of parents in thrusting them into dancing parties even before they have reached their teens.

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THE second danger of pre-teen-age dancing parties is not less real. It is the danger that such parties will force far forward into the process of a child's growing up the desire for and practice of some kind of steady company-keeping. Again this may not show up at once when parents arrange to have dances for their sixth, seventh and eighth grade children. (Make no mistake — there are already plenty of "puppy-love" friendships among grade school kids today.) But, granting that a child may dance its way through the seventh and eighth grades without attaching itself to a girl friend or a boy friend, we emphatically state that the same child will be irresistibly attracted to steady company-keeping in early high school.

In reply to parents who may try to prevent the high school freshman or sophomore from going steady, the child can justly say: "For two years you have been sending me to dances without a steady partner; now I want a steady partner and I'm going to have one."

If there are any parents who don't care whether this happens or not, or who think it cute, or who stoutly maintain that it will do no harm to their children, they are not the ones for whom we are writing. *We* know that such early and steady company-keeping very often leads to sin of one kind or another; that it ruins the education of the child; that it wrecks the relationship between the child and its parents.

ALL this is backed up by a very obvious design of God evident in the natural attitudes and interests of children in their grade school days. Left to themselves, boys before puberty are more interested in boys and in boys' activities: in athletic games, in outdoor pursuits, in physical prowess and skills. And by the same design, girls are ordinarily more interested in playing with their girl friends.

Adults may feel that this order of nature ought to be upset; they may fear that this instinctive exclusion of the other sex from their interests may carry over into their later lives. They need have no fear. Suddenly, shortly after the period of developing puberty, interest in the other sex will ordinarily awaken like the breaking of a dawn. Even then it will have to be

trained to stay within bounds until fuller maturity will make thoughts of marriage prudent and reasonable. But this dawning interest can be forcibly anticipated and pre-arranged, and when it is, the whole process of growing up is beset with unnatural complications. And we think that regular dancing parties, arranged by parents for grade school and early high school children, are an effective way of changing the designs of God.

WE realize that in writing these things we are resisting a trend that has already gathered terrific momentum. We are aware of the large number of Catholic schools that have instituted dancing lessons and dancing parties for grade school children. We feel certain that many of the principals of these schools and many parents themselves have not yet given enough thought to the consequences of what they are doing; they have not realized how much they have yielded to secularism, in its light attitude toward cradle courtships and its heavy emphasis on sex, in this important matter.

We think that the resistance to the trend should now come from parents. If enough parents, deeply convinced of what we have said above, will stand up in P.T.A. meetings and informal gatherings with the teachers of their children, and proclaim their opposition to forcing an interest in sex, through dancing classes and parties, on children not yet even in their teens, the trend can be reversed at least in Catholic schools and wherever Catholic principles prevail. Then

the time that is now given to dancing lessons and parties can be turned over to athletics for the boys and en-

grossing activities for the girls, and high schools will be spared many a problem.

? ? ? ? ? ? Readers Ask... ?

Mortal and Venial Sins

Louis G. Miller, C.S.S.R.

Objection: You Catholics talk a lot about "mortal" sins and "venial" sins. Isn't that rather silly? To me as a Protestant a sin is a sin, and I don't see why you have to confuse the issue by making all sorts of distinctions about it.

Answer: The distinction between mortal and venial sins is a most important one in Catholic teaching, and we think it can also be shown to be most reasonable.

Let us take as an example an offense committed against the commandment which forbids stealing. "Thou shalt not steal," God told us, and therefore it is always wrong to take something that belongs to somebody else. Now suppose a man steals a thousand dollars. That is a very considerable amount of money, and in common estimation, his offense would be regarded as a very serious one. If he is caught by the civil authorities, and his guilt proved, he will doubtless be sent to jail for a considerable period of time.

Such an offense deserves to be called mortal because it represents a serious act of disobedience to God's law. God departs from the soul of a person who thus deliberately insults Him. His departure leaves the soul in darkness, which is equivalent to spiritual death, so far as God is concerned. That is why the sin is called "mortal," which means that it causes death.

Now consider another case, that of a small child, who steals a penny. It has done wrong; it has disobeyed God. But would anyone say the child's sin was as great as that of the man who stole a thousand dollars? Of course not; the child's sin is venial, which means that while it leaves a small disfigurement on the soul, it does not cause God to withdraw the light of His grace.

WE CANNOT suppose that God would be so great a tyrant as to condemn the child to hell for such a small offense. But on the other hand, Christ has made it clear to us that those who deliberately disobey God's law in serious matters, and who die without sincere repentance, must inevitably suffer that dread punishment.

As to how the difference between the two classes of sins can be recognized, a man's conscience and common sense can usually give him a good indication, if he is willing unselfishly to follow where they lead. Some laws in the very nature of things are more important than others, for example, the law governing the right use of the creative faculty. In cases of doubt the Church founded by Christ and safeguarded in her teaching of the truth by His divine presence offers sure guidance by which the soul may preserve itself free from serious sin and in possession of God's life-giving grace.

ISRAEL AND ISRAELI

ARTHUR B. KLYBER, C.S.S.R.

"IF WE can show with reasonable certainty that the Jews of the world are not only NOT UNITED, but are actually FIERCELY DIVIDED on major Jewish issues, we may hope that with God's help genuine love of neighbor will replace the wicked unprovable accusations made against them. This is my sole reason for demonstrating the division that exists among the world's Jews: I have no intention of taking sides."—The author.

IN THE year just passed I was asked at one of my many lectures to Catholics about the Jews, "Isn't it true that the State of Israel is allied to Russian Communism and that the Jews have at last gotten into a take-off position for control of the world?"

So there it was again for the "umpteenth" time: that ever-living, never-dying calumny against the WHOLE Jewish people.

No one has any quarrel with propagandists who at least offer proof of their charges against this or that Jew; but when we hear ALL the Jews stupidly, and often enough malicious-

ly libelled, we find it hard to remain calm.

In the discussion that ensued, the questioner stood forth as an obnoxious *anti-Jew* who succeeded only in drawing on herself the disdain and criticism of the 150 or so Catholics and the several Jews present. When I asked her to tell us *how many* Jews were collaborating in the "fearful plot" to control the world, she replied, after a significant hesitation: "Well — the majority." At this the audience broke into a loud murmur of dissent.

"To you," I countered, "the word *majority* very likely means 90 percent, but I will credit you with meaning a simple majority of 51 percent. On that basis are you prepared to say that every second Jew would welcome the chance to knife his non-Jewish neighbor in the back?" Her silence was eloquent.

Next I pointed out her gross injustice to the multitude of good Jews in using the phrase "THE Jews . . ." while possessing no evidence to back up that global accusation; and I went

on to inform her that for *each* neighbor-hating, world-grabbing Jew she could find, I could bring forward hundreds of good, God-fearing Jews, beginning with a long line of my own relatives.

This brought a round of applause from the audience. "Anyhow," I continued, "what do you want us Catholics to do in a practical way about this wickedness of the Jews which you allege?" After another significant pause she answered: "Well, I want those Jews whom you call good Jews to get after the bad ones." Hmm! Weak enough!

It had become evident by this time that her disorderly mind still hugged the conviction that all Jews were sneaks who had to be watched with an F. B. Eye. Old fanatics, like old soldiers, never die; but unlike old soldiers, old fanatics never seem to fade away either.

After the lecture this poor creature tried to distribute her anti-Jewish leaflets to a very unsympathetic crowd. It was the great Irish liberator, Daniel O'Connell, who said: "Bigotry has no head and cannot think; no heart and cannot feel."

DIABOLISM OR STUPIDITY?

THIS apostle of hate-propaganda was typical of the many fanatics developed by uncritical, gullible reading of anti-Jewish propaganda. But lest some of our readers suspect me of reading into these dope-sheets what is not there, I submit some samples, and ask you to be the judge:

"The Jew Wilson started World War One: the Jew Roosevelt start-

ed World War Two; and the Jew Truman started the Korean War."

"President Eisenhower is a Jew."

"It (the profession of psychiatry) is a Jewish institution which provides anti-Christian plotters with the opportunity to explore the minds of non-Jewish people to advance the Jews and destroy the Christians."

"Beware of Cardinal Newman; his father was a Jew."

"What are we going to do about this Salk vaccine? Can't you see that Salk, the Jew, is heading a movement to kill off Christian children?" (That was the gist of a phone-call to a U.S. Intelligence officer-friend of mine.)

Emulating for *honor* with the above is this capsule of hate: "Let us prevail on every country in the world, including our own (the U.S.) to send all the Jews of the world to Little America . . . far removed from civilization, because no country wants them . . . then there will be no more wars . . . except in Little America where the Jews can fight each other until Jewry is obliterated."

THE MYTH OF JEWISH SOLIDARITY

THAT this wanton condemnation of ALL Jews flows from a common human weakness or tendency to jump to conclusions, anyone can see. I am convinced however that a still deeper cause of this repeated accusation is the strange belief that all Jews are inseparably ONE in religion, ONE in politics, and ONE on every other issue that concerns JEWS. But the very contrary is true. Jews think for them-

selves and will not be railroaded into any proposition or deal that does not convince them.

Rash accusers of the Jews appear to be blind to the glaring psychological fact that persecution, mild or severe, is alone the force that gravitates the Jews into a solid phalanx of self-preservation. If we can show with reasonable certainty that the Jews of the world are not only NOT UNITED, but are actually FIERCELY DIVIDED on major Jewish issues, we may hope that with God's help, genuine love of neighbor will replace the wicked unprovable accusations made against them. This is my sole reason for demonstrating the division that exists among the world's Jews: I have no intention of taking sides.

ZIONISM AND NON-ZIONISM

THE recent invasion of the Sinai Peninsula by the Israeli army provoked a new explosion of anger among the Jews the world over, against the State of Israel; especially when Israeli's Prime Minister Ben Gurion announced that he had worldwide Jewish approval of the invasion. This claim was at once hotly denied by Jewish anti-Zionist organizations.

It should be known that the real *convinced political* Zionists among Jews are in the minority; and that many of the others are Zionists only to the extent that they make donations to the support of the Israeli State or buy Israeli bonds.

Jewish unity is a myth. We can point to at least three Jewish organizations which are set uncomprom-

isingly against the State of Israel. One is The American Council for Judaism, Inc.; another is The Jewish Labor Association; and a third is The Naturei Karta. The American Council for Judaism opposed the Israeli State from the start, not only because of the firm allegiance of its members to the United States, but as well because of their conviction that the State of Israeli was a creature of powerful diplomats.

Together with The Jewish Labor Association, the council terms as false the notion that the State of Israel is the homeland for all Jews and that Jews living elsewhere are exiles. This group counts a fairly formidable 15 thousand or so on its roster and is powerfully vocal through the well-known Jewish laymen and rabbis who belong. In the election-campaign of 1956, the council endorsed President Eisenhower's forthright disapproval of the invasion of Egypt.

In Jerusalem itself, and in Tel Aviv, the native-born orthodox Jews are fiercely resisting the government on a religious ground. The extremists among them are known as Naturei Karta (Zealots, for short). We are told that this organization receives funds from orthodox and reform Jews in the United States. The Naturei Karta brands the State of Israel as an apostate government which cannot show any Biblical foundation for its existence. They insist that no Jewish kingdom can be formed without a Messiah; and they affirm that the Torah alone (Books

of Moses) can form the laws of a true Israel kingdom. In this contention they seem to have the mass support of the orthodox Jews of New York City which alone has about a million *more* Jews than Palestine Israel.

Shoulder to shoulder with these two organizations stands the Jewish Labor Organization (Bund) with a large membership in many countries. In a congress convened in Montreal, Canada, in 1956, they were able to muster as many as 1000 delegates from everywhere — all with jaws set against the State of Israel and its claims. The organization emphasized, among other things, that Jews living outside the State Israel were NOT potential citizens of that state. Zionist Israel, they asserted, is falsely broadcasting the idea that Jews have despaired of their ability to live as nationals in the land of their birth or of their adoption. It is clear from the existence of these organizations that a large, powerful and vociferous bloc among the world's Jews have no sympathy with the Israeli State. It cannot be claimed that ALL Jews support Israeli with money or moral backing. ISRAEL IS NOT ISRAELI.

THE "JEWISH VOTE": COMMUNISM: WORLD-GRABBING

SINCE the Jews are fiercely divided on an issue which involves actually a land of refuge for themselves, is it not safe to assume that they are divided on other important issues. And they are! There is the so-called "Jewish" vote for instance. No one, it seems, has been able to

prove its existence, although Jews and non-Jews have swung it like a club in political issues.

Some astonishing political concessions have been made to obtain this mythical Jewish vote. Here, as in other matters, Jews do their own thinking; they vote according to their party or as independents, and not *en bloc*. The imaginary Jewish unity in voting is carried over into an imaginary unified plot among ALL Jews to crush out Christianity. There is no such scheme at all: it seems that this "plot" is much more widely known among non-Jews than among Jews themselves! I lived among Jews for a long time — I was born one; but I never heard of this nefarious scheme: we were too busy earning a living. One can't help wondering, that if the Jews have such power, why that "Jewish steam-roller" failed to get into motion while Hitler was slaughtering almost one third of the Jewish world population!

Two other phenomena to which the attention of the world was lately drawn should give serious pause to those who rashly libel ALL Jews as being in league with Communist Russia. These are: first, the current religious persecution of 2,000,000 Russian Jews by the Soviets themselves; and second, the well-known diplomatic enmity now existing between Soviet Russia and the State of Israel.

WALK THE WAY OF LOVE

IT WILL be seen that I have avoided discussing at length whether or not any Jews *at all* are involved

in any of these global plottings. I myself have neither the time, nor the interest, nor the qualifications needed to argue the matter. Such affairs are the business of the F.B.I. and of politicians, diplomats and financiers, rather than of priests and the laity. That SOME Jews may be actually pulling the strings that make the world's wicked puppets dance, does not make the whole Jewish people wicked, any more than a Himmler or a Hitler made the whole German people bad.

What I have written here is mainly for the sake of our dear Catholic people whom I hold in great admiration; and whose Godly conduct is my care as a priest. Offensive to God as is the vice of condemning an *individual* without proof of his guilt, what must be the stench in God's "nostrils" when a Catholic thus condemns or holds in suspicion a *whole group*; especially when that group happens to be the Jewish people from whom Jesus the Messiah was born and whom He loves dearly! "Judge not, and you shall not be judged; condemn not and you shall not be condemned."

Has our Lord commanded us to spread the Gospel; or has He ordered us to function as agents of the federal government to probe the lives of the Jews around us? Why not leave espionage to our qualified gov-

ernment agents? Catholics who have made a hobby of reading anti-Jewish propaganda can only with difficulty be credited with doing so out of love of neighbor. Moreover they are wasting precious time, energy and money which is unquestionably worthy of a better cause. What have they gained for themselves from such reading beyond nervousness, anger, frustration, prejudice and the beginnings of hate?

CATHOLICS might reflect that even IF ALL the Jews were plotting the destruction of the Church they would still be burdened in conscience to love the Jews with Christly love. That means at the minimum — *not to hate — to forgive*; and even to try to pray for those who persecute and calumniate US; and to try to *do good* to them. We may *prosecute* if we will, but we are never allowed to *persecute*.



I counsel our good Catholic people and all others too, to quit reading anti-Jewish propaganda, and to re-channel their valuable time and energy into love of neighbor. I beg them to pray for the misunderstood, misrepresented Jewish people that God will grant to them all the good things He wishes to grant — beginning with the coming of the excellent knowledge of the Messiah into their minds and hearts.

(Reprints of this article, and others on matters Jewish, may be obtained without charge from Rev. Arthur B. Klyber, C.S.S.R., 3014 N. 45th St., Omaha 4, Nebraska.)

Pre-Marriage Clinic

Donald F. Miller, C.S.S.R.

Right Conduct in Company-Keeping

PROBLEM: Nowadays it is very rare for a girl to go out with a man who does not insist on wanting "to show his affection" during the evening. I have been following the principle that it is not wrong for a boy-friend to place his arms around me, make love to me and kiss me, so long as passion is not involved and so long as there are no immodest touches of any kind. I feel that a girl should know a man quite well before permitting these things, and that they should not be just a payment for a good time. Are my principles correct?

SOLUTION: The principles are quite easily stated in this matter, but the practice of the principles is not so easy. And there is a little more involved in the matter of embracing, love-making and kissing than is stated in this problem.

A couple out for the evening, whether engaged or not engaged, whether quite well known to each other or not, must avoid such "manifestations of affection" as would almost inevitably lead to the intense desire for or actual indulgence in the pleasures related to sex. Two persons are involved, and each of the two must be concerned not only with avoiding indulgence in forbidden passion in self, but also in the partner. It is sinful, therefore, for one of them to cooperate in or approve of the evil actions of the other, though personally unaffected by evil desire or passion.

It is very clear then that *immodest* touches or actions, committed by one and permitted by the other, are always a mortal sin for both.

It is not so easy to set down hard and fast rules concerning embracing and kiss-

ing. However, it is not correct to say in general that these are never sinful so long as there are no immodest touches. *Prolonged* kisses and embraces become immodest by reason of their duration. There is always a point at which they awaken passionate desires and feelings in one or the other of the two persons, or in both. Thus it is wrong for a couple to make such prolonged kissing and embracing a specific part of a date, as they would do by going to a lonely spot in order to melt into each other's arms. That is why it is so constantly recommended that a couple on a date keep themselves busy with some sort of activity that will preclude their giving in to the desire to take part in prolonged kissing or embracing. This sort of thing is the first step in the moral downfall of many a couple who stated beforehand that they did not want to commit a serious sin.

IN REGARD to a passing kiss or embrace, for example, by way of farewell at the end of an evening together, it is surely wise for a girl not to permit this to any boy she goes out with, even for the first time, as if it were the normal part of a date. If she does, she more or less cheapens herself, and leaves the impression that she will take part in more dangerous forms of kissing and embracing on future dates. The wise thing is to refuse such signs of affection until there is at least a definite understanding between her and a boy friend that they may some day be engaged, and a definite agreement that they are going to do nothing wrong. If this means waiting some time for the right man to come along, it is well worth waiting for.



readers retort

In which readers are invited to express their minds on articles and opinions published in *The Liguorian*. Letters must be signed and full address of the writer must be given, though city and name will be withheld from publication on request.

High School Proms

"I just read the article, *What's Wrong with High School Proms?* — in the November LIGUORIAN, and I do not agree with everything Sister Henrita said. I am a graduate of a Catholic girls' academy. Our junior and senior proms were events we all looked forward to from our freshman year. We were all from average families, but we had lovely formals that conformed to the Sisters' idea of modest dress. Some were new, some were borrowed, and some girls made their own. Our parents were just as thrilled over the affair as we were. I admit there were a few girls who didn't go, but why deprive everybody of the fun for the sake of the few? After the dance we went to a restaurant, had something to eat and danced some more. It was all part of growing up, and I wouldn't have missed it for anything. I suppose some of the teen-agers ended up sitting in a parked car. I have myself, but that, too, is part of growing up. I am grateful for my Catholic training, which has left me with a fine sense of morals. But when I look back at my school days, I can say that my first prom was the highlight affair of the whole four years. I wouldn't want a son or daughter of mine to miss the same thrill.

St. Louis, Mo.

J. L."

• *No one doubts that high school proms are a tremendous thrill for teen-agers, especially those who attend them in such pleasant circumstances as described above.*

The question raised by Sister Henrita and our comments is whether the thrills justify the evils that are increasingly becoming a part of them: 1) the hurt of those who are not invited, or not invited by the right person; 2) the impetus given to premature steady company-keeping; 3) the great expense involved for not too-well-off parents; 4) the moral danger in after-prom (sometimes all night) parties. Proms are indeed a thrill for early teen-agers; but so also, are their sins. It will be a sad day when any of us who love God and love youth just write off the sins "as a part of their growing up."

The editors

"Anyone Hurt Morally . . ."

"In the November LIGUORIAN you ask 'What's Wrong with High School Proms?' I say nothing, at least around here. The prom is something we look forward to from the day we enter high school until we leave. You ask if it hurts young people emotionally. Would you say that because a certain junior or senior doesn't get a companion for the prom, it will stunt their growth? Or maybe cause them to lose confidence in themselves? Maybe for a night or so, but not forever. Does it hurt them financially? Most kids work nowadays, so there's no reason for that. Morally? The prom is a dance, very formal and lots of fun. Anyone hurt morally cannot say that the prom had anything to do with it. Their problems come

from within themselves. I say there is no good reason for giving up the proms.

Ripon, Calif.

D. D."

• *We do not doubt that there are places where the senior high school prom is still well conducted, free from the dangers and evils that have become part of the prom set-up in other places. But wherever proms promote early high school steady company-keeping, wherever they are the occasion for all-night boy and girl parties, wherever they lead to extravagance and personal animosities and disappointments, something must be said against them, no matter how much "fun" they are.*

The editors

The Prom and After

"About your article on high school proms: When I went to high school ten years ago, the prom was a formal dance given by the seniors at graduation and nothing more. Now in the same school, when the prom is held, most of the students leave early for more exciting parties, private dances, refreshments, etc., and some arrive home at seven in the morning or later. How ridiculous! Could not these abuses be removed without taking away the proms? Make it an affair that is to be enjoyed by all, with each student having an equal chance to attend. Let there be dances that all can take part in, whether they have a date or not. Let them get away from the expensive formal attire, and wear informal dress that would not be so expensive. Let there be appealing refreshments and fun for all till closing time. Then everybody expected to go home, with the parents seeing to it that they do go home. Would not these measures make the proms what they used to be? Lansing, Mich.

Mrs. M. P."

• *These are excellent suggestions. The problem is whether, once a thing like the prom gets out of hand, giving rise to the dangers and evils we referred to, it will ever be possible to bring it back to the counsels of reason again. One gathers the*

impression that, for quite a few high school students, it is the post-prom activities that have become the most important. Maybe we are wrong, but they certainly have taken a prominence far out of line with reason. Would the young people themselves any longer be satisfied with such a prom as is described here?

The editors

Kind Words

"The fact that I am writing to you to get back issues of your magazine is greater praise of it than anything I might say in that respect.

Brooklyn, N.Y.

J.A.D."

The Other Cheek

"After reading the scathing letters from some of the 'non-prejudiced' Catholics which you printed in *Readers Retort* I do believe you select the most odious letters for publication; and you can be sure that some of the comments of the letter-writers sent chills down my spine. When your article on racial segregation appeared in the August issue, my husband and I were overwhelmed, not to mention overjoyed, that such a definite stand was taken by you and so candidly asserted. In our mind's eye we visualized the many rebukes that would come your way because of the article. But ever since the time of Christ, when He set forth quite clearly His teachings, there have been continuous rebukes and probably will be to the end of time. It is obvious that you are not trying to sell copies but only reiterating Christ's teachings, which are the teachings of our Mother the Church, otherwise you would not have chosen such a controversial subject at a time when this question is burning 'white' in the South. Incidentally, we became interested in this magazine one day while waiting in our family physician's office last year. He is a Catholic and a Negro. If you think we aroused some comments from our white friends and rela-

tives for having a colored family physician, you are right!

Norwalk, Calif. Mr. and Mrs. J. S."

• *Yes, we did receive some strongly approving letters about the article on racial segregation but the greater number of them came to us after we published the unfavorable letters. As evidence we offer the quotations below.*

The editors

A Vote of Thanks!

"Let me tell you that not all of us Houstonians are of the ilk demonstrated by several letters in your latest issue. It seems to me that so far all of the 'rabble rousing' and 'race-baiting' as well as all the violence has been done by the pro-segregationists. Yet we who are trying to live by God's law are accused of these things. Why? Thank you for your very clear-cut article concerning segregation, and for the entire magazine. I wish all Catholics would realize that you *explain* the laws of God and the Church and that you do not *make* them, and that if one would profess to be Catholic, he must accept those laws in entirety, rather than only the laws with which he agrees.

Houston, Tex.

Mrs. J. E. E."

Majority and Percentage

"Please keep up your good work for the unions, for the Negro and all the poor and oppressed, regardless of how much it upsets the selfish and self-righteous readers. I believe the vast majority of your readers are for your cause, but you seem to get a greater percentage of people writing letters to you whose hearts are full of bitterness. I graduated from the University of Southern California School of Pharmacy, where we had all races and creeds. I found my Negro classmates fully as capable as any of the whites and — what may be a thorn in the side of some people — sometimes *more* capable, although it is true that once they graduate they may not have as much opportunity.

San Fernando, Calif.

R. L. E."

A Look into the Mirror

"I am appalled at some of the letters you receive in the *Readers Retort* section. Your constructive interpretations of integration are really twisted and tangled by some of the readers. Seems as though too many people think that integration means intermarriage. How egotistical can we get? Besides, it takes two to make a marriage and these people who are so upset about the fear of intermarriage would never think of it, so why worry? If these people are looking for something to worry about, here is a list of suggestions from a chronic worrier. 1. Our teen-age girls the country over are squealing and throwing hysterics over a fellow by the name of Elvis Presley, apparently not so much for his singing as for his revolting style. 2. Our highly cultured age has developed a sort of 'medicine-man' cult of writing letters to the very-much-dead movie actor, James Dean. 3. We gobble up a magazine that sells over the counter because we know that its one motive is to make money by ripping the reputations of public performers to shreds regardless of the price or the filthy details. These people in turn are the idols of the teen-agers. Whether this degrading information is true or false, what effect does this have on our children? 4. Theatres compete in the feature section of our newspapers to see who can put out the most daring and alluring and suggestive illustrations and advertising. 5. Less and less respect is shown to parents by teen-agers, because if they do they are called 'squares.' And who was talking about the morals of Negroes? We have room for a lot of improvement in our own white race, and may the Lord give us the understanding and guidance to correct our own faults and sins. If we are kept busy improving ourselves we shall not have time to be worrying about the morals of our neighbor.

Houston, Tex.

Mrs. F. W."

• *We received many other letters in favor of our article on segregation, but we feel*

these samples will suffice to demonstrate the point.

The editors

A Matter of Interpretation

"In your November issue under *Readers Retort* you quote from parts of my letter to you and then imply by your comments that I want Negroes 'to stay away from me.' I did not say that. I have enjoyed the friendship of many Negroes and I respect their right to live and to enjoy life. Because I insist on my right to live in a community of all-white people, it does not follow that I am forcing the colored to live in ghettos. I would never deny them the right to earn a livelihood, and I know that the finest living quarters are available to them in Chicago. If you had lived as close to this problem as I have for 65 years, you would get an entirely different picture than you can get down in your editorial office at Liguori, Missouri. After many years of sincere effort I can only tell you that there is no such thing as a mixed community in Chicago. We have all-white, all-colored, or areas in process of becoming all-colored.

Chicago, Ill.

M. D."

• Surely it is not a misinterpretation to say that a man who proclaims it to be his right to live in an all-white neighborhood is saying that he wants Negroes to stay away from him. The refusal to permit any colored family into a neighborhood because of color alone is one of the traditional forms that racial prejudice takes. We doubt that such prejudice dominates the attitude of all the Christians in Chicago.

The editors

And a Child . . .

"I am an eleven-year-old girl who reads *Readers Retort*, and I want to tell you the way I feel about THE LIGUORIAN. One day I was reading THE LIGUORIAN and overheard Mom ask Dad if it was all right if I read special paragraphs in THE

LIGUORIAN. Dad said, 'If it's in THE LIGUORIAN, it's all right for her to read.' I have always enjoyed THE LIGUORIAN and most likely always will. It makes me sick when I read the letters of some people, saying, 'Cancel my subscription because I was disgusted when I read your article on integration.' I hope people soon start THINKING and reasoning things out.

Hopeville, Ga.

E. H."

• It seems as though this is an example of, "It is better to light one candle than to curse the darkness."

The editors

Purity in Marriage

"Your article, *Purity in Marriage*, has answered clearly and 'to the point' the doubts I have had in my mind since the day we were married two years ago. We were not instructed clearly about these facts before marriage. I think more complete instructions should be given to young couples before marriage, in the way you have done in your wonderful article. Thanks so much for clearing up the doubts in my mind.

Wisconsin

N. N."

The Missal . . .

"Your article *Are You Disgusted With the Missal?* offered solace and some measure of guidance to make use of the missal less difficult. Personally, I use the Father Stedman edition, and I read and familiarize myself with the proper Mass prayers before going to church. When the missal becomes an integral part of you at Mass, you feel lost on those occasions when you forget it. Then you realize how much there really is in the form of holy Mass, and how full of meaning are the prayers. To my way of thinking, holy Mass should be a concert of prayers, offered in harmony with the priest, not a potpourri of personal favorites offered in discord.

Boonton, N.J.

B. M."

... and the Vernacular

"Regarding the proper use of the missal, it's all very well to talk about making it easier, but I contend that sooner or later the vernacular must be used if the faithful are to participate in the action of the Mass, the Gospel and Christian truths. Why quote from a language they don't understand, and then let them 'follow along' in a translation on their own. The form of the Mass is obviously a dialogue between priest and people. Wouldn't it be much easier to act and pray with the priest if the Mass were in English?

Cincinnati, Ohio

B. M."

• *The Church in her new ritual has permitted the use of the vernacular much more than formerly. Her policy in regard to the Mass, however, is to proceed much more slowly. This was reflected in the Holy Father's words concluding the recent international liturgical congress at Assisi, Italy: "The Church turns to the past without copying it blindly, and creates new things, even in the rites themselves — in the use of the vernacular, of popular chants, in the construction of churches. Nevertheless it would seem superfluous to recall once more that the Church has serious reasons for firmly maintaining the Latin: unconditionally for the celebrant, and likewise, when Gregorian chant accompanies the holy sacrifice, this must be in the language of the Church . . ."*

The editors



Lesson Well Learned

"I am a new subscriber, and as a convert, I wish to thank you for the wonderful articles in your magazine. I wish to thank you particularly for the article of a few months ago (my first copy) on racial segregation. To me the traditions of the South have been more than traditions. They have been a way of life! I am a lawyer, and as such have closely followed

all the court rulings on the subject — with great bitterness. Your article shocked me into realizing that perhaps my way of thinking was wrong and contrary to God's teachings. Shortly after reading the article, I was in the lobby of a small hotel in Mexico City waiting for friends. A Negro couple were sitting there looking lost and bewildered. A few weeks before, I would have been horrified that they were even there. But I remembered the teachings in your article and went over and spoke to them. I was able to help them in a strange country and to my great surprise found that they are creatures of God, the same as you and I.

Houston, Tex.

Mrs. M. C."



"I Was Hooked!"

"When I received my first copy of a gift subscription to THE LIGUORIAN last January, I felt that it was to be just another so-called religious magazine being dumped onto me by some religious fanatic in the neighborhood. Under normal circumstances I would have dropped it into a magazine rack with the half-read, partly scanned magazines that we modern folk have to keep in our homes. In a few days it, with the other older publications, would be thrown out or given to a paper collection drive. For some reason I glanced at the table of contents, saw an article on a controversial subject and decided to skim through the article. Gentlemen, I was hooked. I still am. Every issue is read thoroughly. My family is reading it. We find ourselves discussing issues of various kinds from your publication. This year, besides renewing my subscription, I would like to be one of those 'religious fanatics' and send some of my friends Christmas gifts of THE LIGUORIAN. Who knows, they too may get the fever. Reading THE LIGUORIAN is contagious.

Birmingham, Ala.

H. F. S."

To every man God gives a certain number of graces — a certain number of opportunities for saving his soul. What happens when the last grace and the last opportunity have been passed by unused?

FACE DOWNWARDS

Ernest F. Miller, C.S.S.R.

AN early-morning fisherman found the man's body floating face downwards in a patch of rushes and lily pads at the extreme southern corner of the lake. Not far away was the body of the priest, also face downwards. (It was determined only after an examination of a wallet taken from one of the pockets that the second body was that of a priest.) Apparently the violent storm of the previous night had swept the bodies from the open waters of the lake into the sheltered cove.

Both men, of course, were quite dead. Their mouths were open almost as though they were about to speak or as though they had just finished speaking. Undoubtedly that was the way they died—in the act of speech, urgent speech, speech that was cut off only when no longer it was possible.

No sound came from their lips now. No prodding, no drugs, no secrets of science would ever be capable of empowering them to tell what happened out there on the lake

when finally the knowledge came home to them that they were not going to escape; that they were going to die.

But if those open mouths could have talked, this is the story they would have told.

★ ★ ★

IT ALL started with an invitation. It was supposed to end with an absolution — the kind of absolution that a Catholic priest gives when he hears a confession.

The man invited the priest to go fishing with him on the lake. The priest did not want to go fishing. He did not like fishing. He did not like the water. He had never learned to swim. But he was afraid to refuse the invitation; and he had two very good reasons for being afraid to refuse.

The first reason was that he was in the process of building a new parish school; and the man was the wealthiest Catholic living within the boundaries of the parish. It was stretching the point a bit, of course,

to call the man either a parishioner or a Catholic.

But he was known all over town as a Catholic. He marched in Holy Name parades through the streets of the city. He allowed his picture to be taken by the newspaper photographers as he kissed the ring of the archbishop of the diocese. He gave all priests who shopped in his stores a ten percent discount on each and every one of their purchases.

Furthermore, the name that was given to him in baptism was Francis X. — the name of the great Jesuit missionary and saint, St. Francis Xavier. Only a Catholic ever carried such a name as Francis X. But the man was not ashamed of it. Nor did he ever omit the X when signing checks.

What else was necessary to be a member of a parish and to be a Catholic in good standing before God and the Church? He knew the answer to that question himself. Certainly he knew the answer to the second part of the question — what was necessary to be in good standing before God. He was to give the answer out loud before the fishing trip with the priest was over.

So, the priest went on the trip with the man in the hopes that at the end of the outing on the water he would be rewarded with a sizable donation for the new school. If that happened, the day by no means would have been wasted.

THE second reason why he went fishing with the man was the feeling that maybe he'd be able to

show him what it meant to be in the favor of God, to pound some spiritual sense into his head, to convince him that human life was not eternal here on earth and that there were certain vital and necessary things that money and influence could not buy, not the least of which was heaven; in short, he felt that perhaps a trip like this could be the cause of the man's conversion.

The priest was not too hopeful that he would succeed in the project of conversion. Money and power and a conviction of personal infallibility in all matters, even those touching religion, are heavy anchors and can drag a mind deep into the depths of self-sufficiency and pride. But the effort had to be made at any rate. A few hours spent in such an effort, even though they were spent in a boat in the middle of a lake, would have their reward.

The man asked the priest to go with him on the fishing trip on this particular day because he liked to be in the company of priests. Priests for the most part were well-educated and intelligent. One could enjoy oneself in their company without feeling soiled and soured after the visit was over.

After the fishing trip was over, the man could take the priest home with him and introduce him to a few business "big shots" and their wives and friends. The priest's eyes would probably pop right out of their sockets. Give him a drink or two and let him observe the ways of the world that he was so wont

to condemn. If he'd see more of the world, he'd probably condemn it less.

THE man had not taken into consideration the fact that the priest on the fishing trip did not care to go to his home with him for the sake of taking a few drinks and observing the ways of the world. The moment the fishing trip was over, he intended to head straight for his rectory. There were countless things that had to be done and that awaited his attention and decision.

That was the way things stood with the man and with the priest as the outboard motor on the boat fell into its rhythmic tune and began to carry the two fishermen and their fishing gear to the distant reaches of the lake.

★ ★ ★

The storm blew up suddenly; almost, one might say, without warning. There were a few black clouds far off in the west. But they did not seem to presage trouble. And then, as by magic, they were overhead, low and ominous, angrily racing across the sky and gathering force as they came.

Accompanying the clouds came wind and rain—rain slanting down in massed millions of pellets as from the barrels of massed millions of guns; wind howling and roaring and driving the waters of the lake into a frenzy of resistance and rebellion.

Almost immediately the boat began to fill with water. Nor could any progress be made through the

high waves toward the shore, even with the motor turned on at full speed. The more the man pushed the boat forward, the more he courted the danger of swamping it or of capsizing. Yet, if he did not make the shore, both he and the priest would drown. Neither of them could swim. And no longer were there any boats on the lake. They were alone.

BOTH the man and the priest put forth every ounce of energy that they possessed in order to save themselves from the lake. Soaked to the skin, standing in water over their ankles, bailing out the boat as fast as they could, losing and regaining their balance a dozen times just as they were about to go over the side, faltering and fumbling about in the darkness that surrounded them, they did all that humanly could be done in order to ride out the storm and reach the shore safely. But it was no use. And finally they knew it.

It was clear that the lake wanted them. It was clear that the lake was going to have them. And when the lake received their bodies, God would receive their souls.

As far as the man was concerned, his program of action was clear. He had to get absolution for his sins from the priest. As a Catholic, even a worldly Catholic, he believed and he knew that a priest had the power to take away sin. The priest could take away a man's sins if the man confessed his sins and if the priest then pronounced the words of absolution. *I absolve you from*

your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Nor did it make any difference how many the sins were, how long-standing, how heinous. The absolution of the priest could take away *all* sins if they were properly confessed.

Well, the man was willing to fulfill that part of the bargain — the telling of the sins. He had been waiting for this moment all his adult life. *For thirty years he had not made a good, sincere confession and consequently had not received a valid absolution.* He had gone to confession often enough, but only as a front, as a show, to keep peace in the family, to prove to those with whom he did business that he was a man of religion.

But he had meant none of it. He had had no intention of living up to the conditions that were essential to the making of a good confession and for the taking away of sin.

There was that long period of his married life when he supported his wife and another woman besides, who was not his wife. He maintained that he loved her, that he needed her. He needed someone who could comfort him after the exhausting battles that went on each day in the world of business. His wife did not understand him. He doubted that she loved him.

Why tell a thing like that in confession? The priest would go to pieces at the mention of a love nest,

and would immediately demand that it be dismantled and destroyed at once under penalty of being refused the absolution. Why even mention it when one could wait until near the end, when love nests and even love itself could no longer serve a useful purpose, and then receive the absolution in one lump sum for all the offenses of all the years? In that way one could have one's cake and eat it too.

THEN, there were those years of birth-control. He had always felt after his last son was born that he had done enough for the human race. He did not go along with the Church entirely in her teachings on marriage and the duties of married people. He had one girl and two boys—one girl for adornment around the house (like a flower garden) and for the love and devotion that a daughter could give a father, but *two* boys (one as insurance on the other in case anything happened) so that there would be at least one son to carry on the business in the father's name after the father was gone.

But that was enough. He saw to it that that was enough. And he did not tell it in confession. He had no intention of stopping it. Here again he could very easily wait until the end, when the problem would have been solved by time or by the imminent approach of death, and then receive the absolution once and for all and on its tremendous force be carried off to heaven in spite of the badness and hypocrisy of his life.

Over and above these distinct cases of insincerity and double-dealing with God there was a hard sophistication in the man's soul that did not leave too much room for worry about spirituality; there was a long period of preoccupation with business and the making of money so that there was little time left for self-analysis and examination. He never had the time for such things. He could take care of all of that when the time came, at the end when he'd make the best confession that any man ever made.

Here he was at the end now, and his mind had not changed. He was going through with it. He'd make his confession to the priest in the boat with him, and from the priest he'd receive the absolution; and in an instant, even though it was the last instant, all would be forgiven and forgotten, and ten minutes later he'd be in heaven.

But he'd have to hurry. The boat was close to half-filled with water. It could not stay afloat much longer. He was sure, however, that it would stay afloat long enough for him to finish his job. He had to finish his job. This was his last chance. And if there was one thing that he wanted to have nothing to do with it was the fire and the pain of hell. He believed in hell. He was determined to stay out of hell.

CAREFULLY he waded through the water in the boat to the priest's side and sat down next to him. The priest was still working furiously at bailing out the boat. In

between the screamings of the wind the man told the priest his story. He mentioned everything he could think of, every bit of evil he ever accomplished. It was a sad and sordid story from beginning to end—pride and lust and avarice and cruelty and hatred and all the rest laid out end to end like poisonous serpents in a pit, ready to be struck down and killed by the absolution of the priest.

And then a strange thing happened. The priest listened to the confession without a question, without a word. When it was over, he still remained silent. No word of forgiveness, of absolution came through the darkness from his lips. Was he unconscious? Dead before the lake could claim him? What was wrong?

If this was a joke, it was a mighty poor one. Only a man outside his wits would joke while teetering on the brink of death and while the salvation of a soul depended on his seriousness and his readiness to help. No, the priest was not joking; that was certain. There was something else, something mysterious and frightening.

The man drew the priest to his feet, shook him roughly and demanded to know why absolution was not forthcoming. That was the way it always happened in confession. Sins were confessed by the penitent and then absolution was given by the priest. The man shook the priest again, almost tipping over

the boat. He was becoming frantic now. He simply had to receive that absolution. And the priest alongside of him was the only one in all the world who could give it.

And then the truth came out. *The priest did not give the absolution because he could not think of the words that made it up.* A hundred thousand times in the past he had said the formula of absolution in confession. At any other time he could have said it in his sleep. But now, even though a soul's salvation was at stake, he could not find the words. He could not remember even how the formula began. Could the man possibly help him? Could the man perhaps give him a hint as to how the words started?

No! No! No! The man could not help the priest to find the words. That was not his business. It was the priest's business. And he had better find the words immediately or else, or else, or else. . . Or else what? What threat could he make, what vengeance could he heap upon the head of the priest when death for both of them was only a few minutes off?

HE SAGGED down on the seat. The water now was almost to the top. It was strange that the boat could stay afloat. He listened as though he were hearing a voice speaking from afar off. The priest was explaining to him the meaning of perfect contrition, how sins could be taken away even without the absolution if the absolution could not

be given and if the sinner was sorry for his sins because he offended the great and infinite goodness of God and was now determined to love Him with all his heart and soul and strength.

The voice droned on, drowned out by the wind but always coming back, always insisting that there was a chance. The priest hardly seemed afraid. It was as though sinking into the dark waters of the troubled lake were an every day occurrence, a relief. He was sorry that he could not help the man with the absolution. But he could not. That's all there was to it. All he had to offer was the teaching of the Church on perfect contrition. To one who understood, that was enough.

But the man would have none of it. A great anger came upon him. He was being cheated! The winds were laughing and jeering in his face. All his life he had been waiting for this chance. And now it was to be taken away from him. Here, with a priest right at his side, he was to be deprived of the absolution, and that after he had made a thorough and complete confession. It wasn't fair. The priest was holding out on him. The priest simply did not want to give him the absolution. Well, he would see about that. He leaped to his feet and lunged at the priest . . .

THAT was what he should not have done. That was all that the boat needed in order to give up its struggle with the storm. Quietly, gently it slid beneath the waters,

and the waves washed over it and covered it as though it had never been afloat or borne a passenger. And when all trace of it had disappeared, the storm ceased and the winds with one last roar departed

and were heard no more. The waves and the winds had done their work. The stars and the moon could come out now and behold the length of the arm of God and the strange workings of His justice.

ORDINATION GIFT

Among the many beautiful and appropriate gifts received by a priest just ordained was an unusual token of profound significance. It was a telegram from a boyhood friend with whom the priest had studied Latin and had served as an altar boy. It read:

"Dominus sit in corde tuo et in labiis tuis ut digne et competenter annunties Evangelium suum."

Translated it reads: "May the Lord be in thy heart and on thy lips, that thou mayest worthily and fitly announce His Gospel."

J. R. Brouse



SURPRISE!

A Baptist minister in the South had to bury a man who had a very bad reputation. He was, of course, expected to say something complimentary about the man in the funeral sermon. After some reflection he overcame the difficulty by saying:

"We shall all be greatly surprised when we get across the line by finding some people in heaven whom we never expected to meet there. We shall be still more surprised by not finding there some whom we had confidently expected to meet there. Most of all, we shall be surprised at getting there ourselves."

The Priest

PROGRAM KIT FOR PRESS MONTH

In many parishes it is customary to prepare a display of posters, literature and reading lists to promote good Catholic reading. The Catholic Press Association offers a program kit to help set up such a display. The kit is prepared for Catholic schools, colleges and lay organizations and contains up-to-date information designed to help Catholic people know their press better.

For example, there is a collection of addresses given by several popes on the Catholic press. Another pamphlet explains the special purposes of Catholic newspapers, magazines, pamphlets and books. A project sheet lists several ideas for a Press Month program. A directory gives complete mailing addresses of newspapers and magazines.

Other helpful aids include a pamphlet on how to set up a press exhibit during Press Month and a special pamphlet for speakers at Press Month programs. A forceful poster message will set the theme for any Press Month gathering.

February is Catholic Press Month. You can still do your share to help spread the influence of the Catholic press. Order your Press Month Program kit by writing to the Catholic Press Association, 150 East 39th Street, New York 16, N. Y. Payment of \$1.00 should accompany your order.

POINTED PARAGRAPHS

Suggestion for Catholic Press Month

For many years February has been Catholic Press Month. For too many of those years the publicizing and the promotion of the Catholic press has been left to those who are directly concerned with its production instead of being made a cooperative enterprise shared in equally by the "consumers" or readers of the Catholic papers and magazines.

The task of making the Catholic press the instrument of power that it should be in the spread and defense of the truth is the duty not only of its editors and feature writers but also of the readers of Catholic newspapers and magazines.

The Catholic press needs an articulate reading public. It needs readers who will talk up and let editors and writers know when they are missing the mark, when they are not capturing and holding attention. The editor cannot hold his readers simply by commanding them to read; nor by quoting what has been said by popes and bishops about the obligation every Catholic has of being informed

about his faith and his Church and the correct Catholic attitude toward the events and changing policies and circumstances of the times; nor by publishing material that has only one meritorious feature, namely, that it is orthodox and true.

Readers of a publication can help its editors and writers make it appealing and successful. They can perform this valuable service by writing to the editor and stating their reaction. Let the statements be blunt and clear and honest. For example:

"Your paper or magazine doesn't help me. Its material is above my head. It is not appealing. After one session with your publication I have no inclination ever to look at another copy."

If that were done by *many* readers (not merely by one or two who can give no correct estimate or picture of results as a whole) editors would have something to work on, instead of reaching out in the darkness.

Furthermore, the Catholic press needs an outspoken reading public that will report on the effect of Catholic reading matter on the indifferent

Catholic, the sliding-away Catholic, the fallen-away Catholic, the non-Catholic and the pagan. Are Catholic editors touching the minds of such people at all? They themselves will never know unless Catholics who are in direct contact with such people will make the friendly effort of helping them get a look, first of all, at Catholic reading matter and then report on the reaction that followed.

Catholic publications render a valuable service to good Catholics themselves, but it should not end there. If Catholic publications do not make the truth appeal to those who are renouncing it or fighting against it, or who have never known it, there is still something lacking in their work. But the publications will never receive a report from the people who need to be helped most of all; only through zealous Catholics who work and play and converse with the children of error, can such reports be made.

How about making a contribution to the program of Catholic Press Month this year? This is something that every Catholic reader of a Catholic publication can do: write to the editor and tell him what he can otherwise never know: whether he is helping his Catholic readers and whether he has ever been known to make an impression on the half-Catholic mind.

Lay Helpers of Christ

"The world belongs to him who loves it most, and proves his love." This saying is ascribed to St. John Vianney, who in his own life demon-

strated its truth, in that he had the world at his doorstep, coming to him to find consolation and guidance in his confessional.

Every age has such unselfish heroes, but not enough of them. In our own age, it is a remarkable trend which sees increasing numbers of laymen and laywomen who dedicate themselves to help Catholic missionaries in remote areas at home and abroad.

The Grail, for example, is well known for its accomplishments. In it Catholic young women dedicate themselves to the lay apostolate, and are trained to fulfill their role in the spiritual renewal of the modern world. *The Grail* is at work, under the direction of the hierarchy, in 15 countries on six continents, from Surinam in South America to Hong Kong in China. Workers are trained in a special institute for overseas service, in which the nature and scope of the modern lay apostolate are studied, as well as the practical skills of first aid, hygiene and group leadership.

The Witness, diocesan weekly of Dubuque, Iowa, lists other instances of lay participation in the missions. Thirteen young women, graduates of Regis College, Weston, Massachusetts, are now serving in mission territory where Catholics are few and the need of helpers is great. Seven lay helpers are at work in Baclar, Mexico, where they have helped revitalize the faith. A few months ago eight young people sailed from Los Angeles to help Catholic missionaries instruct the natives of primitive areas

in Africa. This group, which includes a married couple and eight girls, has promised to work at their mission posts for at least three years.

These are indeed encouraging signs that an increasing number of Catholics love the world enough to win it for Christ — even though heroic sacrifice is the price they have to pay.

Concerning Abortion

This subject is one that formerly one would not dare mention in a popular magazine. It should be written about today, however, because of its alarming prevalence. According to reliable estimates, there are some hundreds of thousands of deliberate abortions in the United States each year. It should be written about also because of certain wrong ideas which are current in regard to this matter.

What is referred to here, of course, is *deliberate* abortion, namely, that which is brought about by deliberate intent. The Catholic Church regards such an action as a great crime; so much so that she attaches an excommunication to any woman guilty of it, and to anyone who participates or cooperates in her crime.

The Church takes this attitude because she looks upon the unborn child as a human being with full human rights from the time of conception itself. Deliberately to take the life of such a human being is to be guilty of nothing short of murder.

The point needs to be brought out that this attitude is not confined to Catholic teaching. The ancient Hippocratic oath long before the time of

Christ required doctors to pledge: "I will not give to any woman anything to produce abortion." The modern Geneva version of the Hippocratic oath, as adopted by the World Medical Association, which includes our own American Medical Association, does not mention the word abortion, but nevertheless contains this pledge: "I will maintain the utmost respect for human life from the time of its conception."

In Anglo-American criminal law, one who feloniously inflicts injuries upon an unborn child, which is born alive, but subsequently dies from the injuries, is chargeable with homicide as in the case of killing any other human being. Unborn children are capable under the law of taking a legacy, or, if born posthumously, of assuming an inheritance. The thinking behind these provisions obviously is that the unborn child is a human being, capable of human rights.

Criminal law also, of course, protects the unborn child from being intentionally aborted. Authorities, be it said to their credit, have frequently come down hard on the despicable operators of abortion mills.

An exception in the criminal (but not in the moral) law permits a so-called "therapeutic" abortion to save the life of the mother. But the best medical opinion now, even among non-Catholic doctors, is that the progress of medicine has rendered therapeutic abortion less and less important and less and less frequent. At a 1951 Clinical Congress of the American College of Surgeons it was

advocated that therapeutic abortions be outlawed. It was reasoned that anyone who performs a therapeutic abortion today does so because he is either ignorant of the modern methods of treating the complications of pregnancy, or is unwilling to take the time to treat them.

We are indebted for much of the information contained here to an article by T. Raber Taylor of the University of Colorado, in the *Linacre Quarterly*, a medical journal published by the Federation of Catholic Physicians' Guide.

Welcome to the Family!

People who embrace the true faith in their adult years and formally become members of the Catholic Church often find themselves in a somewhat lonely situation. In some cases, their conversion occasions opposition and actual hostility from their relatives, especially if they are the first in their families to make such a move. With little or no sympathy behind them, and with small acquaintance among Catholics, they may be prey to a feeling of isolation which can be a very heavy cross to carry, despite the profound peace of mind they now enjoy.

No doubt this cross may be part of the sacrifice God asks them to accept in exchange for His great gift. But surely God does not want us to make the convert's cross heavier by wilful neglect. The convert indeed deserves to be given a warm welcome into the household of the faith, and made to feel quickly that he is surrounded by family affection. •

February, 1957

Worthy of note in this connection is an organization founded for the precise purpose of making converts feel at home and helping them advance in the knowledge of their religion. It is called *The Guild of St. Paul*, and was founded by a zealous priest, Father Leonard Nienaber, in 1937. It has branches in many parishes throughout the country. In keeping with its purpose, various activities are sponsored according to the circumstances in each parish. There is usually a monthly meeting, a combination social "get-together" and instruction forum. Not only converts, but "cradle-Catholics" may attend.

As soon as a chapter of the guild is activated in a parish, an arrangement is made whereby an older convert is asked to be present at the baptism of each new adult convert. He thus becomes a "guardian angel" to the neophyte, encouraging him to the frequent reception of the sacraments and the full performance of his duties as a Catholic. Every convert is urged to gain one new convert to the faith each year.

Those who wish further information about the Guild of St. Paul may write to its headquarters at 438 W. Second St., Lexington 13, Kentucky.

The Alphabet of Good Housewifery

The writers of the Old Testament often used stratagems to capture the attention of their readers, such as using consecutive letters of the alphabet to begin successive sentences. Monsignor Ronald Knox, in his translation of the Bible, tries to capture

the flavor of just such an alphabetical poem. By an anonymous writer, and found in the book of Proverbs, Chapter 31, the passage outlines beautifully the ABC of the ideal wife and mother. We are indebted to the *Annals of St. Anne* for calling it to our attention:

A man who has found a vigorous wife has found a rare treasure, brought from distant shores.

Bound to her in loving confidence, he will have no need of spoil.

Content, not sorrow, she will bring him as long as life lasts.

Does she not busy herself with wool and thread, plying her hands with ready skill?

Ever she steers her course like some merchant ship, bringing provision from far away.

From early dawn she is up, assigning food to the household, so that each waiting-woman has her share.

Ground must be examined, and bought, and planted out as a vineyard, with the earnings of her toil.

How briskly she girds herself to the task, how tireless are her arms!

Industry, she knows, is well rewarded, and all night long her lamp does not go out.

Jealously she sets her hands to work, her fingers clutch the spindle.

Kindly is her welcome to the poor, her purse ever open to those in need.

Let the snow lie cold if it will, she has no fears for her household; no servant of hers but is warmly clad.

Made by her own hands was the coverlet on her bed, the clothes of lawn and purple that she wears.

None so honored at the city gate as that husband of hers, when he sits in council with the elders of the land.

Often she will sell linen of her own weaving, or make a girdle for the travelling merchant to buy.

Protected by her own industry and good repute, she greets the morrow with a smile.

Ripe wisdom governs her speech, but it is kindly instruction she gives.

She keeps watch over all that goes on in her house, not content to go through life eating and sleeping.

That is why her children are the first to call her blessed, her husband is loud in her praise:

Unrivalled art thou among all the women that have enriched their homes.

Vain are the winning ways, beauty is a snare; it is the woman who fears the Lord that will achieve renown.

Work such as hers claims its reward; let her life be spoken of with praise at the city gates.

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LIGUORIANA

Septuagesima Sunday—February 17

Your Soul is Important

By St. Alphonsus
Selected and Edited by
John P. Schaefer, C.S.S.R.

THE parable which the Church chooses for the Gospel of this Sunday is that of the workers sent into the vineyard. We might make a further application of the parable. The vines of the Lord are our souls, given us to cultivate by good works, that we might one day be admitted into eternal glory.

The ancient Christian writer, Salvian, remarked: "How is it possible for a Christian to believe, and still not to fear the future?" Yes, Christians believe in such things as death, judgment, hell and paradise. But many live as if they did not believe in these things — as if these truths of faith were fables or the inventions of a storyteller. They live as if they will never die, as if they will not have to render an account to God of their life, or as if there were no such things as a hell or heaven.

Christians believe in these truths, but many do not reflect upon them. It is for this reason that many are lost. They take all possible care of

worldly affairs, but do not attend to the salvation of their souls. That you may not be numbered among those who do not reflect upon the importance of their salvation, I urge you to consider this truth. The salvation of your soul is the most important affair of your life. First, because if the soul is lost, everything is lost. Secondly, because once lost, the soul is lost forever.

Most people are very attentive to the business of this world. They exert all possible diligence, for instance, to win a lawsuit or to obtain a better position. Because of their efforts, they will frequently even neglect the care of their health, neither eating nor sleeping. But what efforts do they make to save their souls? Men will become enraged or ashamed if they are accused of neglecting their families. But few are ashamed at the charge of neglecting the salvation of their souls.

S T. BERNARD once made a very wise and penetrating statement: "The affairs of children are called trifles, but the trifles of men are called business." It is for such trifles that many lose their souls. If someone

were to suffer a loss in a business transaction, it can be repaired in another. But if you die at enmity with God, and lose your soul, how can you repair that loss? *What exchange shall a man give for his soul?*

Another saint, St. Eucherius, adds this motive: "If you fail to comprehend the value of your soul from the fact that it has been created by God to His own image, then learn it from Jesus Christ. He has redeemed you with His own blood." "You were not redeemed with corruptible things, as gold or silver, . . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb unspotted and undefiled."—Peter 1:18.

Such is the value which God places upon your soul. Such is its value, also, in the estimation of the devil. That he might become master of it, he does not rest. Pope Benedict XII illustrates this value in an incident of his own life. A prince once asked for a favor from him. The pope could not conscientiously grant it and told the ambassador: "Tell the prince, that if I had two souls, I might be able to lose one in order to please him. But since I have but one, I cannot consent to lose it."

This truth no one can dare to consider lightly. If you save your soul, failure in every worldly transaction will be of little importance. For if you are saved, you shall enjoy complete happiness for all eternity. But if you lose your soul, what will riches, honors, and amusements profit you? *What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul?*

St. Ignatius of Loyola employed this maxim of the Gospels to draw many souls to God. Among them was that of St. Francis Xavier. Ignatius met Francis one day in Paris and said to him: "Francis, whom do you serve? You serve a traitor — the world. It promises, but does not fulfill. And if it should fulfill all of its promises how long will they last? Longer than this life? And after death, what will they profit you?" Another saint was made when Ignatius crowned his words with those of the Gospel: "*What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?*"

St. Philip Neri used to say that he who does not seek the salvation of his soul above all other things is a fool. The accusation is harsh, but all too true. For men have it in their power to secure the eternal goods of heaven, and yet lose their time over the perishable goods of the earth. For these they will expose themselves to the danger of the eternal torments of hell.

THE great Scripture scholar, Cornelius á Lapide, makes the following comment upon this passage of St. Paul: "The fashion of this world passes away." "The world," he says, "is like a stage." Life is like a play, which passes away. The man who acts his part well, who saves his soul, is happy. But if he shall have spent his life solely in the gaining of riches and worldly honors justly can he be called a fool. At the hour of his death, the words of the gospel will serve as a reproach to him: *Fool, this night*

do they require thy soul of thee; and whose shall these things be which thou hast provided?

Upon our death, theologians explain, an angel shall come to present our souls before the tribunal of Jesus Christ. If we shall have lost our souls by attending only to the acquisition of earthly possessions, these shall belong to us no longer. Our earthly goods will pass to other hands and, then, what shall become of our souls?

If we would but free ourselves for a moment from the consideration of the little things of the world, we could see the wisdom of St. Francis Xavier's statement: "There is in the world but one good and one evil." The former consists in saving our souls, the latter in losing them. For if I save my soul, all is safe. If I lose it, all is lost.

THERE is another all important consideration inviting your attention. It is this: if your soul is once lost, it is lost forever. Men die but once. If we were permitted two deaths, one might be excused a bit of negligence at first. But we can die only once; if the soul is lost the first time, it is lost forever. St. Teresa had a very terse statement of this truth: "One soul, one eternity."

St. Eucherius used to say that there is no error so great as the neglect of eternal salvation. It surpasses all other errors, because there is no repairing it. Other mistakes can be repaired. If one should lose prosperity in one way, he may acquire it in another; if he should lose a position, some

dignity, he may later recover them. Even if he should lose his life, provided his soul be saved, all is safe. But for the loss of a soul there is no reparation.

This is the constant torment of the damned: that for them the time of salvation is over. For them there is no remedy for their eternal ruin. But what will it profit them to know that they have been wrong, when it is too late to repair the wrong?

Yes, the greatest torment of the damned will arise from the thought that they have lost their souls, and have lost them through their own fault. We ourselves become disturbed when, through negligence, we lose something — even though it be a trifling thing. But what shall be the pain of the damned upon entering hell, at the thought of having lost his soul, his everything — and of having lost it through his own fault!

From this day forward you should devote more time to reflection upon these truths. Even in the midst of all your occupations your attention should be centered chiefly upon the salvation of your soul. There is no question here of losing some earthly thing, which someday you will have to relinquish anyway. Here there is question of losing heaven, and of having to suffer forever in hell. We must, as St. Paul admonishes, work out our salvation in *fear and trembling*.

If we would save our souls, we must labor at it — to avoid the dangerous occasions of sin, to resist temptations, to frequent the sacra-

ments. For without laboring we cannot obtain heaven.

THE saints themselves trembled at the thought of eternity. St. Andrew Avellino one day tearfully exclaimed: "Who knows whether I shall be saved or damned?" St. Louis Bertrand trembled when he said: "What

shall be my lot in the other world?"

—To what kind of thoughts do these truths give rise in you? Pray to Jesus Christ and His Blessed Mother for help in the salvation of your soul. It is the most important affair of your life. If you succeed in it, you will be eternally happy. If you fail, you will be forever miserable.

THE YOUNGER BROTHER OF CRUELTY

Meanness may be called the younger brother of cruelty. It is the habit of taking pleasure in small hurts inflicted on others. Check your conduct for these examples of downright meanness.

1. Backbiting, which is telling a person how much he is disliked by a third person, or what unkind things have been said about him in his absence.

2. Criticizing some highly esteemed and cherished possession of another, or some accomplished work of which he is quite justifiably proud.

3. Using a nickname or designation to or of another person that is known to be highly offensive to him.

4. Making natural defects or bodily deformities an object of jest or ridicule. (There is no lower form of meanness than this.)

5. Laughing in the face of a person who makes mistakes in grammar and rhetoric.

6. Frightening people, who are known to be gullible, by wild tales of imminent danger or disaster.

7. Ridiculing a person's nationality, race or religion.

8. Drawing attention repeatedly to a person's mistakes, even after they have been corrected and atoned for.

9. Perpetrating so-called practical jokes, in which somebody is humiliated, hurt or ridiculed.

All these examples are of little things, and the hurt inflicted by them will vary according to the sensitiveness and refinement of the person involved. The important point to be remembered is that to hurt another without reason is always a sign of meanness, and meanness is the younger brother of genuine cruelty.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Thomas Tobin, C.S.S.R

We recommend that books listed or reviewed in **THE LIGUORIAN** be purchased at your local bookstore. If you cannot obtain the book in that way, you may write to **THE LIGUORIAN** for further information.

The Nun's Story

Kathryn Hulme

This book, a selection of the Book of the Month Club, has brought forth controversial reviews from Catholic sources. There has been some confusion as to whether it is novel or biography. The answer is that it is the true story of a Belgian girl which has been retold in a fictionalized form by a gifted writer. Sister Luke enters the convent in Belgium, prepares herself for tropical nursing and spends some time in the hospital of her order in the Congo and finally obtains a dispensation from her vows to return to secular life. The reason that Sister Luke gives for leaving the convent is the difficulty with obedience. "Obedience without question, obedience without inner murmuring, obedience blind, instantaneous, perfect in its acceptance as Christ practiced it—as I can no longer do."

What is this reviewer's opinion of **The Nun's Story**? It is very definitely a well-written book that keeps the attention of the reader. It is in no way a Maria Monk type of book that spreads vicious lies about religious life and attacks the life that the girl could not lead. The girl leaves without bitterness and continues in the practice of her Catholic faith. My adverse criticism is that the author in praising the nuns, praises them for the wrong thing. She emphasizes nuns who are "living rules" and who do not leave room in their rules for the practice of fraternal charity when circumstances demand. The nuns are made so stiff and starched and inhuman that they do not make for each other the home that they have a right to find in the convent. Perhaps there were nuns, perhaps communities of nuns like that, but they do not exemplify the Christlike spirit of love and consideration for each other. This is not a vicious book by any means, and undoubtedly will entertain many and lead to many differ-

ent opinions about the nuns. I am afraid that it will not encourage any vocations and surely will not give a typical picture of convent life.

(Little, Brown and Co., \$4.00)

The Open Book

Edited by Pamela Whitlock

The subtitle, **Stories, Essays, Poems, Songs and Music for Boys and Girls**, gives the contents of this book, but only a reading of the book itself will reveal the treasures found between the pages of **The Open Book**. Pamela Whitlock has chosen the material from many lands and many authors. The first part rewrites episodes from the Gospel in language for children; the second section tells boys and girls how to keep the two commandments of love; the third part explains the great feasts of the Church year; the fourth section consists of short stories; the last part is composed of songs to sing, unison songs, descants, rounds and part songs. The children as well as their parents will enjoy this feast. Some of the chapters can be read by the older youngsters. Most of the book can be read by the parent or teacher and retold to the children. The editor intended to compile a family book of instruction and entertainment and she has succeeded very well in her task. Couples in the Christian Family Movement could find great use for this book.

(P. J. Kenedy and Sons, \$3.75)

Give Us This Day

James Keller

This is the latest in the Christopher series of books. Composed of the pieces which appear daily in many newspapers, these short essays illustrate a moral point by means of a short anecdote. A good book to have within reach or better still to read daily as a means of spiritual inspiration. The essays reflect the spirit of the Christophers — the power of the individual to change his little world and the ability of thousands of individuals to change the big world.

(Hanover House, \$3.00)

My Boston Pilot Column

David Goldstein

For over fifty years Mr. Goldstein has fought with pen and tongue the good fight for the cause of Catholic truth. On street corner, in halls and in his study, he has battled for an understanding of Catholic doctrine against those who have attacked it. A convert from Judaism and Socialism, Goldstein is always eager to join swords on those two

points. This book is composed of reprints of articles that have appeared weekly in the Boston Pilot and cover many fields of Catholic apologetics. The convert and the cradle Catholics will profit from these essays.

(Catholic Campaigners for Christ, \$3.00)

The Treasures of Mission Santa Ines

Kurt Baer

Santa Ines is one of the old Spanish missions in California and this book is a history of the mission as well as a catalogue and description of the various paintings, sculpture and craft works found in the church. Good black-and-white photographs of the art works add to the value of the book. Primarily a guide for the student who visits the mission, yet it furnishes a picture of the missions in California.

(Academy of California Church History, \$5.00)

Total Consecration to Mary

Joseph Dayet, S.M.M.

The devotion of total dedication to Mary which has been inspired by St. Louis De Montfort has become increasingly popular among the faithful. This present book is a fine presentation of the theology of the devotion, a type of book that would be expected from the pen of a priest who spent his whole life preaching the De Montfort devotion. Those who desire to consecrate themselves totally to the Blessed Mother as well as those who have practiced this devotion for some time will find both instruction and inspiration in this book.

(Montfort Publications, \$2.50)

The Priest

Joseph Caruso

The Priest is another one of the many new novels about priests and religious that are being found in greater abundance in the book stores. Writers of novels, movie and TV scripts and short stories have suddenly found that priests and nuns make interesting copy.

Joseph Caruso is a Boston man who was brought to his home city from Sicily at an early age. In this novel he writes about a young Sicilian-American priest who enters the priesthood after the war in order to atone for his sins. Filled with remorse over the use he has made of his powerful hands to hurt others, he wishes to use them to bless others. The plot centers around the traditional setting of a seal of the confessional situation. He hears the confession of a dying murderer who confesses to a crime for which

another man is sentenced to death. Then begins the struggle within the soul of Father Octavio Scarpi. It wouldn't be fair to the author to reveal the solution, but important to the review is the fact that the murderer's deaf and dumb mother who is in the room at the time of the confession regains her hearing and learns that her son is guilty of the crime of murder.

Catholics will discuss the seal of confession and it might be worth while to present the facts as given by the author and the correct interpretation of them. The mother, who knows from the confession, is accompanied by Father Scarpi, who heard the confession, to the district attorney, who had prosecuted the innocent man condemned to death for the murder. Father Scarpi sits there in agony and tells the district attorney that he cannot talk, but plainly reveals by his discomfiture that he does know something. The daughter helps the mother reveal that she knows her son is a murderer from the confession that she overheard. What of this? 1. Father Scarpi had no business being in the office with the mother and daughter and he surely was not being prudent in his silly conduct in the presence of the district attorney. No real priest with his knowledge of theology would allow himself to get into such a situation. 2. Father Scarpi was in the wrong in helping the mother reveal the confessional knowledge because the Code of Canon Law quite clearly states that anyone who comes in any way to possess knowledge from the confession of another person is bound by the same sacramental seal as the priest. This means that under no consideration could Mrs. Scarpi be allowed to reveal this knowledge to anyone, not even to the district attorney. Father Scarpi failed in his duty as a priest in not reminding the mother of her obligation; much more did he fail in helping her reveal the secret.

What of the book as a whole? It is well constructed and interestingly narrated. The author has a fairly good grasp of the subject matter except that there are many little errors and odd interpretations (besides the serious one on the seal of the confessional) such as having a priest say Mass in Italian (page 19), a false argument against a mixed marriage (page 91) and speaking of the introit for the week (page 73). Like many modern novels there are several needless references to illicit sex that do not add to the plot nor increase the value of the book. Because of these references and because of the serious error in the heart of the plot itself it is not recommended to the immature reader, but the mature reader could find this novel a fast-reading book.

(Macmillan Company, \$3.50)

She Who Weeps

Leon Bloy

Translated by Emile La Douceur, M.S.

Leon Bloy, the zealous and often intemperate firebrand of the full Catholic life and the implacable foe of mediocrity, was always interested in the apparition of Our Lady at La Salette, especially since he was born in the year in which the apparition occurred. Father La Douceur, a Missionary of La Salette, has gathered all that Bloy wrote about the apparition which consists of two books and passages from other books. There is no doubt that Bloy is always interesting and inspiring reading if the reader can check his own temper that rises in protest against the violent outbursts of the man who attacked all and everyone. But Bloy is a lover of the Blessed Mother and a great publicist of La Salette. The editor has prefaced the book with a short sketch of Bloy's life that will serve as a necessary introduction to this violent man who did love the Blessed Virgin.

(Academy Library Guild, \$3.00)

Contemporary Church Art

Anton Henze - Theodor Filthaut

Two German scholars, one a theologian and the other a professor of the history of art, have collaborated on an explanation of **Contemporary Church Art**. An English woman, Cecily Hasting, has translated it and an American architect and editor of **Liturgical Arts**, Maurice Lavanoux has written the preface to the American edition. The authors intended to present a practical guide to artists as well as a general explanation of modern art in the construction and adornment of the new churches. Dr. Henze writes the first section on **The Potentialities of Modern Church Art and Its Position in History** in which he discusses the history of church art and its present position. An excellent chart points out the historical relationship between a civilization and the form given to its places of worship. Father Filthaut describes the connections between **Church Art and the Liturgy** in the second section. Practical considerations on the furnishings of the church are the topics treated in this part. The final section is devoted to one hundred-twenty-nine pages of illustrations of architecture and art furnishings of the church. This is an excellent book for the general reader who desires some art and theological principles for the formation of his own conclusions about the highly controversial modern churches. The reader will necessarily be enlightened and at least will have an understanding of the ideals that modern church art is trying to express.

(Sheed and Ward, \$7.50)

LUCID \ / INTERVALS



Bobbie's birthday was next week. That night after saying his usual prayers, he shrieked the following petition:

"Dear God, I pray that I will get a new bicycle and an electric train for my birthday."

"What are you hollerin' like that for?" asked his little brother, "God isn't deaf."

"I know," replied Bobby, "but grandma is."

•

"What platform for the westbound train?" the old lady asked the porter.

"Turn left and you'll be right," he answered cheerfully.

"Don't be impertinent," she said.

"Oh, very well, then," retorted the porter. "Turn right and be left."

•

"Is your husband in?" asked the caller.

"Yes, he's in," replied the wife.

"Good," exclaimed the other, "then perhaps I'll get the money he owes me."

"Don't get up your hope," smiled the wife knowingly. "If my husband had any money he wouldn't be in."

•

A youth and his girl friend were out driving one summer night. They came to a quiet spot on a country lane and the car suddenly stopped.

"Out of gas," said the boy.

The girl nonchalantly opened her purse and pulled out a flask.

"Swell!" exclaimed the boy. "Scotch or Bourbon?"

"Gas," replied the girl.

•

A man rushed into a bar and asked the bartender, who was busy wiping the bar, if he knew anything that would stop hiccups. The bartender's answer was a slap across the man's face with the wet bar towel.

Surprised and furious, the stranger demanded the reason for such action. With a placating grin, the bartender replied: "Well, you haven't got any hiccups now, have you?"

"I never had any," the man said indignantly. "I wanted something for my wife. She's out in the car."

•

Doctor: "Now look here, Angus, you will have perfect health if you will eat more fruit. Especially you must eat the skins of fruit, since they contain valuable vitamins. By the way, what is your favorite fruit?"

Angus: "Coconuts."

•

Andy: "What's the idea of painting your car green on one side and red on the other?"

Sandy: "Think of the fun I'll have listening to the witnesses contradicting each other if I should get involved in an accident."

•

"I say," said the novice, who was being given a demonstration in a used car, "what makes it jerk so when you first put it in gear?"

"Ah," said the salesman, "that proves what a good car it is—it's so anxious to start."

BEST SELLERS

A Moral Evaluation of Current Books, Published at the University of Scranton, Pa.

HEADLINERS

The Last Hurrah (IIa)—*O'Connor*
 Auntie Mame (IIa)—*Dennis*
 King of Paris (IIb)—*Endore*
 The Loving Couple (IIa)—*Rowans*
 A Single Pebble (IIa)—*Hersey*
 A Thing of Beauty (I)—*Cronin*

I. Suitable for general reading:

My Lord, What a Morning—*Anderson*
 Face Toward the Spring—*Baldwin*
 This Hallowed Ground—*Cotton*
 Birdwatcher's Quarry—*Coles*
 Framed for Hanging—*Cullingford*
 Sahara Adventure—*Diolé*
 Dead Indeed—*Hodgkin*
 The Catholic Viewpoint on Race
 Relations—*LaFarge*
 The World of Opera—*Lawrence*
 Blue River—*Lochridge*
 Vision: A Saga of the Sky—*Mansfield*
 The Burned Man—*Monig*
 As I Saw the U.S.A.—*Morris*
 Solov'yev—*Munzer*
 Hangman's Cliff—*Neill*
 Battles That Changed History—*Pratt*
 Bird of Sorrow—*Romaniello*
 The Years Were Good—*Seltzer*
 Search Beneath the Sea—*Smith*
 The Church in Soviet Russia—*Spinka*
 Eat, Drink and Be Buried—*Stout*
 Might as Well Be Dead—*Stout*
 Autumn Across America—*Teale*
 The Trouble With the Irish—*Wibberly*

II. Suitable only for adults:

A. Because of advanced style and contents:
 Murder of Whistler's Brother—
 Alexander
 Gloves, Glory and God—*Armstrong*
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Atomic Quest—*Compton*
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 Selected Letters of Charles Lamb—
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 Jefferson, Champion of the Free Mind
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 Stong
 . . . and the Rain my Drink—*Suyin*
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 not, however, invalidate the book
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 The Trouble with Gumballs—*Nelson*

III. Permissible for the discriminating adult:

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